Australian post-1970 solo piano literature: a study of the available literature including a discussion of relevant contemporary compositional elements

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Recommended Citation
AUSTRALIAN POST-1970 SOLO PIANO LITERATURE.

A STUDY OF THE AVAILABLE LITERATURE INCLUDING A DISCUSSION
OF RELEVANT CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONONG

by

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FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS

1998
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing the following thesis and its accompanying guide I have received assistance from many people whose help I gratefully acknowledge.

The staff at the Australian Music Centre has provided invaluable assistance in my search for relevant research materials and has offered inspiration and moral support for the entire project. I would particularly like to offer my gratitude to Anthea Parker, Judith Foster and Anne Welch of the library staff; to Harriet Cunningham, Caitlin Rowley and John Mackerras for their assistance with proof reading and editing of the published guide; and especially to John Davis, General Manager, whose encouragement and support has always been of benefit.

I am also grateful to Anthea Parker for proof reading the text and offering valuable suggestions.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Eric Gross who took on the role of external supervisor and whom I thank for his support and guidance. Many of the composers whose works have been mentioned in this study have been extremely helpful with comments and, in many cases, scores and recordings. I would especially like to thank Mr. Robert Allworth, Mr. Phillip Wilcher, Dr. Ross Edwards, Mr. Stuart Greenbaum, Mr. Bruce Crossman, Mr. Colin Spiers and all of the other composers who have assisted me in my pursuit of pertinent material.
Thank you also to Mr. David Vance and Dr. Andrew Schultz, my supervisors at the University of Wollongong, and to the University of Wollongong for providing financial assistance in the form of an Australian Postgraduate Award for the period of my candidature.

Chrissy Ralston, of the library staff at the University of Wollongong, was very helpful in her advice on the library services and I thank her for her time and assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Goetz Richter for his support, encouragement and constructive criticism.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine compositions for solo piano by composers who are Australian, either by birth or residential status, written between 1970 and 1998.

This dissertation firstly surveys the available teaching and concert performance repertoire. It deals primarily with stylistic trends pursued by Australian composers today. Secondly it discusses contemporary innovations in piano writing relating to the Australian repertoire. This includes a discussion of possible difficulties encountered when performing the works. Basic musical concepts such as notation, rhythm, harmonic language, articulation and technical difficulties, and contemporary effects are examined. The dissertation wishes to provide a practical approach to the repertoire for those teachers and students who may be unfamiliar with the literature available and with some of the musical elements inherent in scores composed after 1970.
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INTRODUCTION

Performances of Australian music have greatly increased in the last few years. This is in part due to the promotion of Australian music by the Australian Music Centre, established in 1974 and which has increased its public profile in the last ten years. Another significant factor is that a number of educational and arts organisations are now including Australian works as a regular part of their activities. For example in New South Wales, Australian music is a mandatory subject for the 2 unit course of the Higher School Certificate. Students who choose the performance component must perform an Australian post-1970 work. In other states of Australia the comparable music course for the final year of high school also includes the option of performing Australian works, even if it is not a mandatory requirement. For its prestigious Young Performers' Award, the ABC insists on the inclusion of a contemporary Australian work in the program for the first round. Many other competitions and eisteddfods now have an Australian section which helps to promote the music of Australian composers. The Australian Music Examinations Board (which since the 1970s¹ has included Australian works in its syllabus) has in its revised syllabus of 1999 included a large percentage of contemporary Australian works.²

Despite the fact that performers and teachers are constantly made aware of Australian works, for many the choice of repertoire remains limited.

²The 1999 syllabus has not yet been published and this information was obtained in a private interview with members of the syllabus committee.
to a few well-known composers and often to those composers who write for
the piano using traditional harmony and idioms.

Unfortunately, there remains an aversion to contemporary music
amongst the general public as the arts journalist Laurie Strachan has wryly
observed:

The great mass of classical music lovers has long considered
contemporary music to be little more than an ugly cacophony foisted
on them by a bunch of academic eggheads who wouldn't know a
melody if they found one in their soup. ³

Amongst this public are music teachers and students, some of whom
have attended seminars given by the author on Australian solo piano
literature during the course of this study⁴. Many of the teachers at these
presentations commented that they still feel trepidation about tackling some
of the more unusual concepts which occur quite frequently in music written in
the last thirty years. They feel that their own training has not covered methods
of dealing with innovations to keyboard technique and they are therefore not
in a position to either pass information on to students or to encourage the
students to discover practical methods of realisation of these elements for
themselves.

One of the main purposes of this study is to survey as much as possible
of the literature for solo piano written by Australian composers in the period
1970 to 1998 and to create a means of introducing these composers and
their works to a wider audience, especially those composers and works which
may not be mainstream.

Because it is still customary to study eighteenth and nineteenth century
literature when learning an instrument, many students when confronted by
innovations to piano writing which have been introduced in the twentieth
century find the problems related to the realisation insurmountable. Problems

⁴Lectures and seminars were conducted in Brisbane, Sydney, Camden Haven, Inverell and
Tamworth.
that usually arise relate to notation, unusual rhythmic patterns, non-tonal harmonic language, pedalling instructions not previously encountered and the use of various parts of the piano other than the keyboard to produce sounds. This paper attempts to examine the Australian literature in terms of twentieth century innovations to writing for the piano, and to suggest various methods of dealing with difficulties which could arise.

For the purposes of this study the music chosen has all been composed during the last twenty-eight years, from 1970 until the present, 1998. The only exceptions to this rule are some works composed earlier but substantially revised during the above mentioned period and those works published during this period where the actual date of composition is unknown. These works have been examined and included only if it can be supposed from the existing evidence that the date of composition was most likely after 1970.

The Australian Music Centre has a policy to promote Australian music and all the piano music written by composers with either full or associate representation status at the Australian Music Centre has been considered in this study. Works of other composers have been included if they work and live in Australia at the present time and their works are either published or have come to the attention of the author by some other means.

The study has aimed to be as comprehensive as possible. Although no personal judgements of quality were placed on the works included, the Australian Music Centre's assessment process has played a major part in the selection of scores included for discussion.

A published guide to the solo piano works in which 900 works are briefly described in terms of their difficulty and availability accompanies this

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5The composers represented at the Australian Music Centre are classified with either "full" representation meaning that all their scores may be held by the library or "associate" representation meaning that five works of the composer's choice are held in the library.
dissertation.6 (See Appendix I). The dissertation expands on the areas discussed in the published guide with particular reference to selected works.

Chapter one provides an overview of the repertoire as a whole and will discuss stylistic connections between the works and the composers represented. Such aspects are not dealt with in any depth in the published guide which deals with each composition individually but does not discuss any overall stylistic trends and does not evaluate the scope of the repertoire.

Chapter two deals with notational problems encountered and the interpretation of various notational symbols which may appear foreign to many students. Difficulties in understanding a score can sometimes stem from the ambiguity of conventional symbols as well as the use of non-conventional symbols without the aid of explanation. This chapter attempts to highlight various examples, giving some explanation to the possibilities of interpretation.

In most of the works studied in this research a particularly consistent feature has been the existence of complex rhythmic structures. Chapter three will examine selected works and discuss ways of solving some of the performance problems relating to rhythm.

Unless a harmonic language is familiar to performers it can at first be difficult to come to terms with a new score. Chapter four deals with the idiosyncratic harmonic language of some of the composers' works and approaches to the learning of these pieces.

In many examples of contemporary music, the pianist is required to reconsider the conventional traditions of keyboard technique especially in regard to pedalling, articulation and sensitivity of touch. Chapter five

6 Several of the scores, despite repeated efforts on the part of the author, were not obtainable before the publication deadline. These works are, however, listed for archival reasons and include as much pertinent information as was available.
examines these aspects, paying particular attention to unusual techniques and different demands placed on the performer.

Chapter six looks at various contemporary techniques such as plucking inside the piano, preparation, the use of silence and other effects used in the surveyed repertoire. While many of these techniques predate the twentieth century, their widespread use identifies them as relevant stylistic devices of contemporary music which remain a source of novelty to the uninitiated.

In summary, this dissertation attempts to present a practical approach to contemporary innovations in Australian post-1970 solo piano works, always from the standpoint of a student who has been musically reared in traditional methods and who may not have encountered some of the contemporary compositional techniques in works previously studied. It is hoped that the study will be of practical use to performers and teachers in the advancement of Australian solo piano literature.
CHAPTER ONE

Over the last thirty years the output by Australian composers of solo piano music has been prodigious and reflective of styles following current trends of contemporary composition similar to other western countries. The term "contemporary", literally meaning "present day" has become, when applied to art music, synonymous with a "forward thinking", innovative style. The works chosen for this research have been included because they were written in the specified time frame and not because they are representative of any particular stylistic trend.

This study is based on a fairly exhaustive collection of post-1970 Australian solo piano literature. While not claiming to be completely comprehensive, and accepting that there are still works not mentioned, the 900 works, including collections, examined represents the greater part of all available material. These 900 works are attributed to 221 composers. They include the works of composers who belong to different generations, who come from diverse backgrounds and who have contributed to the literature for several reasons. Some have been prompted to contribute to the literature by commissions, others for pedagogical purposes; many pieces merely spring from the desire to explore the medium and the inherent sonorities of the piano.

To facilitate discussion the works can, very broadly, be divided into two major categories: those designed particularly for pedagogical reasons and those works which are written for performance purposes in a variety of situations. These two large sections comprise a diverse range of works representing many different styles.
Pedagogical Works

Most of the works surveyed were written for pedagogical purposes. These compositions are directed at many levels of performance ability and aim to develop a variety of different techniques. Many of the composers are teachers of the instrument and have been especially diligent in composing works which will develop skills where they as teachers have experienced problems relating to technical development. The Australian Music Examination Board also often employs these same composers as examiners and their compositions reflect a continuation of certain teaching traditions that have proven successful in the examination and eisteddfod context. Two composers who have focussed on this area are Miriam Hyde and Dulcie Holland. Born in the same year (1913) both composers have written extensively for the piano during most of their lives and have contributed much to the development of teaching material in Australia. In both cases the bulk of their output, and particularly their published work, is designed for teaching purposes.

Miriam Hyde was influenced firstly by composers such as Scriabin and Debussy and was later inspired by pictorial associations and personal experience.\(^7\) \textit{Reverie}, written in 1926 when the composer was thirteen, is one of Hyde's earliest catalogued works and is still performed regularly by students today. In the period from 1970 until the present day, Hyde has continued composing works both for concert and teaching purposes. In the latter category exist such teaching collections as \textit{Captain Cook Suite}, which integrates aspects of Australian historical and cultural background;\(^8\) \textit{Children's Suite no.1 and 2; Little Sketch Book; Musical Memories; Three}

Impressions and Tone Pictures designed for various technical levels and capabilities from beginners to more advanced players. There also exist many single pieces, usually with a pictorial association, such as Story of a Budgerigar, Pigeons in the Studio, Ear Rings from Spain and Water Nymph to name a few. The works are all tonally based though few retain pure diatonicism. Rita Crews describes the musical language of Miriam Hyde as "pandiatonic", meaning "inclusive of all diatonic notes." The music of Hyde merges from one key into another with great ease, while always remaining tonally based.

Dulcie Holland studied composition at the Royal College of Music, London with John Ireland and in Australia with Roy Agnew. She has written many collections of works including Picture Pieces for Young Children, Piano Sketchbook, Pianoscapes, Play a New Piece and Ten Study Pieces as well as many single pieces. In some of the collections by Dulcie Holland there is evidence of experimental techniques. The collection, Picture Pieces for Young Children, written in 1975 and designed for beginner to grade one students, incorporates clusters (palm and fist) and knocking on wood for a particular effect. Play a New Piece, a collection of six pieces written in 1978 and designed for second and third grade players, includes a piece (Ghost Walker) which has a silently depressed five note cluster in the left hand and a melody played over the top by the right hand.

Both Hyde and Holland are teachers who have written compositions to help students overcome technical difficulties at different levels of proficiency. Their compositions for children generally are based on pictorial associations and have been used extensively in the AMEB grade books and general syllabus since 1970. While Hyde's work is essentially traditional in its

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approach despite the more advanced harmonic language in certain examples, it is extremely idiomatic and remains immensely popular with students.

Other composers of the same generation who have contributed works in a similar style for teaching purposes include Mirrie Hill (1892-1986), Marjorie Hesse (1911-1986) and Dr. William Lovelock (1899-1986). The works written by these composers are again composed mainly for children with pictorial associations and descriptive titles and are traditional in their harmonic approach. These composers are part of a similar generation of composers, all of whom undertook their own musical study in England in the early part of the century.

Composers in the next generation include Larry Sitsky (b.1934), Colin Brumby (b.1933), Sr. Marie Duchesne Lavin (b.1930), Joanne Maree (b.1939), Paul Paviour (b.1931), Nigel Butterley (b.1935), Eric Gross (b.1926), Betty Beath (b.1932), Ann Carr-Boyd (b.1938), Mary Mageau (b.1934), Miloslav Penicka (b.1935), Lawrence Whiffen (b.1930) and Rosalind Carlson. Among their works for solo piano, all of these composers have written pieces designed for teaching purposes. One the most notable is the collection of six pieces written in 1970 and published in 1973 called Piano Games by Nigel Butterley. Intended for a player with approximately three to four years playing experience, the pieces are designed to introduce the student to a range of contemporary techniques. The second piece of the series, Echoes, explores the possibilities of harmonics created by silently depressed chords. The fifth piece is aleatoric, giving the performer the opportunity to determine the order of musical events.

11The exact date of birth of several composers is not known: Rosalind Carlson is one of those composers. However personal acquaintance suggests it is most likely that she falls into this generation of composers.
Also of special interest is the set of pieces titled *Six Moods in Miniature* (1972) by Eric Gross. The set provides an interesting variety of different styles and moods. Each piece has a characteristic interval and rhythmic structure which extends the musical experience of the player. They are written for a player with approximately four to five years playing experience.

American-born Mary Mageau has written several works exploring contemporary innovations to keyboard writing and designed for many levels of ability. Particularly significant are the contributions she made to the publication *Adventures in Time and Space*, Volumes I and III\(^{12}\) in which she employs bitonality, knocking on the body of the piano, simple preparation and aleatoric procedures.

Larry Sitsky has the distinction of being one of Australia's foremost composers and a brilliant pianist who has performed and recorded a great deal of his own music and the music of his colleagues. His position as lecturer and music educator has influenced a number of younger composers and fellow teachers of the instrument. The majority of pieces in his large output of works are for very advanced players, but the teaching collections *Bagatelles for Petra: Seventeen Contemporary Pieces for Young Pianists* and *Century 128* are important works in the teaching repertoire, highlighting contemporary methods of composition.

Ann Carr-Boyd has written copiously for piano, employing many different techniques. Her two publications, *Listen* (1981) and *Look at the Stars* (1978) which together cover teaching pieces for beginners to approximately eighth grade standard students, explore a diverse range of styles including jazz influenced pieces, tonal and non-tonal works, articulation effects and rhythmical challenges suitable for the standard for which the pieces are designed.

\(^{12}\) Published by the Schmitt Music Centre Inc. Minneapolis, 1973/1975.
Paul Paviour has written an impressive collection of works including symphonies and orchestral pieces. His choral works complement his role as musical director of the Goulburn Consort of Voices. He has also composed several volumes of teaching material for piano. The series, *Make a Note of This*, is published in three volumes of graded pieces and reinforces the teaching of traditional musical concepts.

Amongst works written by those composers born in the forties including Ross Edwards (b.1943), Gary Featherstone (b.1949), John Colborne-Veel (b.1945), Ross Fiddes (b.1944), Shirley Harris (b.1941), Robert Keane (b.1948), Graham Powning (b.1949), Michael Hannan (b.1949) and New Zealand born Gillian Whitehead (1941) are many examples of important teaching repertoire. Ross Edwards has composed three sets of teaching pieces, all of which devise interesting rhythmical challenges for the student. The *Three Little Pieces for the Right Hand Alone* are dance-like in character and are published in an important collection of works written exclusively for one hand. The publication, *Piano Music for One Hand*, is edited by Shirley Harris who has specialised in teaching children with coordination difficulties and physical handicaps. Many composers have contributed to this collection including Edwards, Don Kay (b.1933), and Michael Hannan.

Robert Keane, who is presently based in Townsville and has established his own music publishing company, has written a series of three works which use the names of Australian animals for their titles, and a series of jazz pieces designed to introduce even the youngest player to jazz style rhythms and harmonies. Gary Featherstone's large contribution to the repertoire consists mostly of tonal works which are intended to develop many technical and musical aspects of the student's performance. The pieces are all traditional in approach harmonically, notationally and rhythmically.

Graham Powning, oboist and composer, has written a series of pieces, presently all unpublished, for students with reasonably basic technical skills.
John Colborne-Veel, trombonist and composer, has composed a series of fifteen short descriptive pieces in a traditional style designed for students of approximately one to four years learning experience.

The younger generation of composers, ie. those born since 1950, has also produced a great deal of excellent teaching material. Some of the material is traditional in concept while other material reflects a more experimental style of composition. Composers who have contributed works in the pedagogical area include Stephen Leek (b.1959), Andrew Ford (b.1957), Kerin Bailey, Margaret Brandman (b.1951), Linda Ceff, Lesleigh Thomas (b.1966), Matthew Dylan Jones (b.1962), Michael Easton (b.1954), Roderick MacFarlane, Michael Whiticker (b.1954), Colin Spiers (b.1957), Julian Yu (b.1957) and Phillip Wilcher (b.1958).

Andrew Ford's amusing work, *Eight Australian Birds Discover the Music of the Twentieth Century* is an excellent introduction to the styles of eight different twentieth century composers, accommodating the technical capabilities of a beginner. The composers in question are Berg, Bartok, Ligeti, Pärt, Cage, Glass, Sculthorpe and Messiaen.

Stephen Leek has composed several groups of works especially designed for students who begin to learn the piano when they are teenagers. His argument\(^\text{13}\) is that many works, which involve contemporary compositional methods, are daunting from a technical perspective and a certain technical level must be reached before one can approach these works. His collections—*Seven Days for Young Pianists*, *Seven Places*, *Seven Windows for Young Pianists*, and *Six Nights for Young Pianists* are all relatively easy technically but introduce the student to a variety of compositional styles including serial music, aleatoric music, and concepts such as harmonics, pedalling techniques and ostinato.

\(^{13}\) From a discussion held with Stephen Leek, regarding the above-mentioned works for piano, in February 1998.
Matthew Dylan Jones works mainly as an educator for piano students at all levels and has concentrated his compositional efforts on writing and publishing teaching material. His composition, *Greedy Row Snake* which was published by the Australian Music Examination Board in the Series 12 Preliminary Grade Book is an excellent introduction to the tone row for the beginner pianist.

The teaching collections written by both Kerin Bailey and Roderick MacFarlane are jazz style, tonal works which are appealing to children. Julian Yu's collection of *Six pieces for Young Pianists* is a good combination of traditional and non-traditional elements to create works that are attractive and excellent for pianistic development.

Many of the works mentioned above have appeared in the publication edited by pianist, Sally Mays. This publication, *Australian Piano Music*, will eventually consist of a series of seven volumes and is published by Currency Press. The volumes are progressive, i.e. Volume I is for beginners and Volume VII is to contain advanced pieces. Presently Volume III is available with Volume IV and V planned for release soon. The publication contains mostly works representing different contemporary styles including aleatoric music, atonal and bitonal works, the use of clusters, polyrhythms and various cross rhythms and non-traditional notation. Every 'new' concept is explained and in many cases a preparatory exercise is included to familiarise the student with the concept before the piece needs to be attempted. Sally Mays is an avid supporter of contemporary music and has given many premier performances of music by Australian composers. The publication offers excellent teaching material and aims at overcoming some of the trepidation felt by many teachers when confronted with contemporary works.
Piano repertoire for concert or other performance.

In those works not predominantly concerned with pedagogy, a variety of styles can be observed and there are many external discernible influences. A number of composers continue to write in the traditional tonal fashion with references to nineteenth century idioms. These composers include Grant Foster (b. 1945), Warren Abeshouse (b.1952), Phillip Wilcher, Noel Dervieux (b.1921), George Dreyfus (b.1928) and Philip Johnston (b. 1970). Vernon Lisle (1906-1995) also contributed piano music in this idiom. The compositions themselves are in many cases dependant on classical and romantic formal structures such as the sonata form, and use romantic titles such as Arabesque, Romance, Prelude and Fantasy.

In much twentieth century music the influence of jazz is discernible in the rhythms and chordal structures used. This influence is especially noticeable in the Australian teaching repertoire already mentioned but also in works not particularly designed for teaching purposes. Mark Isaacs performs mostly as a jazz pianist and his Twelve Preludes (1986) for piano are well written for the instrument in a jazz style. Mary Mageau’s Ragtime, Stephen Cronin’s Perihelion Rag and Michael Easton’s The Old Queen’s Rag are further examples of this direct influence. Many composers have been influenced by elements of jazz and incorporate some elements into their compositional style, for example Stuart Greenbaum (b.1966) and Nigel Sabin (b.1959). The music of these same two composers also reveals a discernible influence of minimalism, also apparent in the music of Mark Pollard (b. 1957), John Peterson (b. 1957), Carl Vine (b.1954), Sarah de Jong (b.1952), Robert Davidson (b.1965), Stephen Adams (b.1963) and Matthew Hindson (b.1968).

The style of writing which has become known as "new complexity" (although it is perhaps not the term that the composers would particularly
apply to their own work) is evident in the works of Chris Dench (b.1953) and Roger Dean (b.1948). Some of the composers who are interested in sound sculptures and experimental music have contributed to the piano repertoire. They include Ernie Althoff (b.1950), Mal Webb, Ron Nagorcka (b.1948) and Warren Burt (b.1949). These composers appear to be influenced by John Cage and other American experimental composers.

Debussy has been one of the more influential composers of the century and his piano music appears on programs of piano recitals more frequently than that of any other twentieth century composer.¹⁴ His exploration of a new harmonic language inspired later composers to do the same. Messiaen owes some debt to Debussy and the language of both composers is evident in some Australian works. Graeme Koehne's *Twilight Rain* (1979) is a piece of pure impressionism. Brenton Broadstock's (b.1952) *Aureole 4* (1984) uses a harmonic language which is reminiscent of the same style.¹⁵ Ross Edwards shows elements of the influence of Messiaen, especially in the structuring of his rhythmic language.

Schoenberg and the serial method of the second Viennese school have had a profound influence over composers for the whole period of the twentieth century. Messiaen carried serialism further into duration and articulation. The influence of serialism, in all its later developments, is obvious in the works of many composers including Robert Allworth (b.1943) and Georges Lentz (b. 1965), and the influence of Messiaen particularly is evident in the works of Michael Hannan, Richard David Hames and Gerald Glynn. Bartók shaped tonality into a distinctive idiom employing classical formal structures and imbuing them with overtones of his folk background. The influence of Bartok, particularly his fondness for quartal harmony, is also

¹⁵ Both these works are discussed in more detail in Chapter three and five and include musical examples demonstrating the influence of the harmonic language.
discernible in the works of Australian composers such as Eric Gross and Colin Spiers.\textsuperscript{16}

Many of the Australian composers included in this study hold teaching positions in composition at tertiary institutions and have therefore been responsible for influencing their students. One of the main examples of this is Peter Sculthorpe who has been teaching at the University of Sydney for close to forty years. The composers who have studied with Sculthorpe are in many cases now teachers themselves. Students include Ross Edwards, Anne Boyd (b.1946), Colin Bright (1949), Brenton Broadstock, Barry Conyngham (b. 1944), Stephen Adams (b.1963), Michael Ahearn (b.1962), Phillip Bolliger (b.1963), Margaret Brandman, Jim Franklin (b.1959), Elliot Gyger (b.1968), Michael Hannan, Christian Heim (b.1960), Wendy Hiscocks (b.1963), John Peterson (b.1958), Paul Stanhope (b.1969) and Caroline Szeto (b.1956). Of these composers Ross Edwards, Barry Conyngham, Brenton Broadstock, Jim Franklin, Michael Hannan, Christian Heim, Anne Boyd (who is Professor of Music at the University of Sydney) and Paul Stanhope have also held teaching positions at some stage and have in their turn been responsible for guiding a younger generation of composers. Other important teachers have included Eric Gross also at the University of Sydney, Peter Tahourdin in Melbourne, Richard Meale in Adelaide, Colin Brumby in Brisbane, Larry Sitsky in Canberra and Roger Smalley in Perth. Another teacher who has influenced a great many students is musicologist, Richard Toop, at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Toop has not personally contributed any repertoire to the collection but many of his students have done so. They include Michael Barkl (b.1958), Michael Whiticker (b.1954), Andrew Peachey (b.1968), Michael Lonsdale (b.1961), Elena Kats-Chernin (b.1957), Michael Smetanin (b.1958), Gerard Brophy (b.1958) and Riccardo Formosa (b.1954).

\textsuperscript{16} The works of Colin Spiers, with reference to his use of quartal harmony, are discussed in Chapter Four with pertinent musical examples.
Some composers also studied with prominent European and American composers such as Edmund Rubbra (Peter Sculthorpe), Peter Maxwell Davis (Ross Edwards, Hellgart Mahler, (b.1931) and Gillian Whitehead), Wilfred Mellers (Anne Boyd), Maurizio Kagel and Franco Donatoni (Gerard Brophy), Alexander Goehr (Colin Brumby, Malcolm Fox (1946-1997) and Ann Carr-Boyd), Louis Andriessen (Michael Smetanin), George Crumb (Andrew Schultz b.1960), Donald Erb (Houston Dunleavy, b. 1962), Lennox Berkeley (Michael Easton), Matyas Seiber (David Lumsdaine, b.1931), David del Tredici (Nigel Sabin), Maurizio Kagel (Moya Henderson, b.1951) and in the case of Barry Connyngham with Japanese composer, Toru Takemitsu. This overseas study has had many ramifications including the contact with current contemporary compositional trends and a wider sphere of influence. Many of the composers including Julian Yu, Theodore Dollarhide, Warren Burt, Eric Gross, George Dreyfus, and Felix Werder also come from European, American or Asian backgrounds and bring a cosmopolitan element to Australian music by incorporating European, non-western or folk musical elements.

The end result is a very interesting collection of piano works, which invite investigation and encourage performance.
CHAPTER TWO

NOTATION

For the performer, the score is undoubtedly the starting point of the process of familiarisation with a work. It is also in many cases the only contact that the performer may have with the composer. To give a faithful reproduction of the musical content it is therefore necessary for the score to provide unambiguous instructions so that the composition can be communicated by the performer to an audience.

In performing music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one becomes accustomed to the carefully edited scores from which to study the essential details. It is rare that a student today would find it necessary to perform standard repertoire written in these centuries from a facsimile, though facsimiles may certainly be included with some published editions.¹⁷ A facsimile can provide an interesting exercise in understanding the composer's personality and can settle disputes regarding questionable editing, but for the majority of students the necessity of having to prepare a traditional work from a handwritten score would be a rare experience. Tradition prevails in the interpretation of these works: there is the added benefit of excellent reference material on interpretation, phrasing and articulation related to individual composers, and there are generally many recordings available for those performers who wish to involve themselves totally in the learning process of a work.

In the case of a composition written by a contemporary Australian composer the written score itself is sometimes the only study material

¹⁷ The Allans edition of the Bach Preludes and Fugues edited by Warren Thompson contains, for example, a copy of the facsimile of each work.
available. In many instances the scores exist only in facsimile and the work has never been recorded. If the notation used is non-conventional and is not accompanied by an explanation, the performer may be tempted to either disregard the work or be forced into a position of falsely interpreting the symbols used.

Numerous reference works exist relating to that part of contemporary notation which has become standardised. Indeed there have been world wide symposia on the subject and standards imposed upon publishers and suggestions made for composers\textsuperscript{18}. Not all composers follow these conventions and some may instantly devise a notational symbol and use that in preference to one which has been standardised. In aleatoric music, for example, it is more usual for the composer to devise a symbol which may only be used once in one composition for a particular effect.\textsuperscript{19} In the case of some published material, notational shorthand is sometimes used which firstly may need deciphering to understand the full meaning of the text.

For performers, notational problems not only occur when symbols to which they are unaccustomed are used but can also arise when the performer is confronted with multi-staves, unusual use of leger lines, extensive use of detail, uncommon symbols for pedalling requirements and rhythmic patterns which may not conform to usual groupings.

When examining published compositions by European and American composers of the period 1950-1980,\textsuperscript{20} it becomes obvious just how much

\textsuperscript{18} There are many excellent reference works on contemporary notation such as: - Notation in New Music by Erhard Karkoshka; New Music Notation by David Cope; New Music Vocabulary by Howard Risatti; Music Notation by Gardner Read just to name a few. Also at least two symposia have been held (i) in Rome, at the Latin-American Institute - the International Symposium on the Problems of Graphic Notation in 1972 and (ii) in Darmstadt, the Congress on the Notation of New Music, 1964.


initiative composers can demonstrate when trying to create a certain sound culture in devising notational symbols.

Ex. 1 from Guero by Helmut Lachenmann, 1969. Published by Breitkopf & Haertel, 1980 (example of graphic notation)

Ex. 2 from the Third Sonata by Pierre Boulez, 1968. Published by Universal Edition (London) Ltd. (Example of a score written in fragments)
By comparison, the 900 compositions written by Australian composers in the period 1970-1998 are relatively traditional in their approach to notation. In the majority of works, traditional (i.e., standard notational practices of the nineteenth century) notation has been employed. Only occasionally is the notation used non-traditional and/or slightly ambiguous.

**Use of Multi-staves.**

The common practice in the nineteenth century was to notate piano music on two staves which could be prefaced by either the treble or bass clefs and which, most often, referred to right and left hand. One of Debussy’s greatest contributions to the evolution of piano music was the introduction of three staves. This created the possibility of clarifying the melodic line as distinct from the accompaniment. Subsequent editions of nineteenth century music also employed this method of separating the melody onto a separate stave for interpretative purposes. This practice is obviously not strictly contemporary but has been known to confuse teachers and performers when first confronted with the extra stave.

There is much use made of multiple staves in the works studied; indeed there are so many examples of works scored on three staves that it is totally commonplace. Perhaps the most extreme example of multi-staving is in the composition *Book of Bells* by Anne Boyd (1981). Boyd intends to create the effect of different bell sounds. Each 'bell' has individual characteristics of mode, registration and rhythm and to differentiate them the score is written on up to ten staves. Reading ten staves simultaneously can appear daunting but is in fact a logical method of separating the individual parts. The bells occur

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22 For example in the Henle edition of the Schumann Romance in F# major op.28. no.2., published in 1957, the melody is differentiated by separating melody and accompaniment in the right hand and placing almost the entire composition on three staves.
simultaneously and consecutively and obviously can be performed by two hands.

Ex. 3 from *Book of Bells* by Anne Boyd, unpublished.

At the other end of the spectrum is music for two hands notated on one stave as in the examples - *Music for Piano- Ascending and Descending* by Jennifer Fowler (1980), *Exit* by Ross Hazeldine (1990) and *Jangled Bells* by Julian Yu (1980 rev. 1992). Writing on one stave does not necessarily dictate the thickness of the texture. Instead of separating melody from accompaniment, or only writing single line textures, the music has been
condensed onto a single stave and, in some instances, is still relatively thick texturally.


Ex. 5 from *Exit* by Ross Hazeldine. Published by Red House Editions, Melbourne, 1990.

Ex. 6 from *Jangled Bells* by Julian Yu. Published by Red House editions, Melbourne, 1990.
In all three examples it is possible to observe that although it is necessary to use both hands to perform these works, the use of one stave facilitates the legibility.

**Leger Lines**

The use of leger lines, although not in itself a form of non-traditional notation, can hinder legibility when used excessively. Traditional practice in publishing demonstrates the use of the octave or double octave sign to indicate notes higher or lower than are convenient to read with many leger lines. With the more widespread use of computer music notation programs, many scores contain passages using leger lines, the reading of which becomes a technical difficulty in itself. Many of the scores studied for this paper were self-published using a computer program. A computer has no problem in notating any amount of leger lines but for the human eye it can be awkward to differentiate between the third and fourth lines for example in a passage that is already quite fast.

Ex. 7 from...back to the centre, by Bruce Crossman, 1997. Unpublished.
One can become adept at reading notes in a certain territory - even where several leger lines are used, particularly if the score is printed. However when the entire range of the keyboard is used, as is the case in many compositions, the learning process can be hindered.

New notation for pedalling.

In some scores written by hand it is interesting to view the diverse pedalling instructions and requirements for which the composers deemed it necessary to create a different notation. In the following example, taken from the first page of a score by John Polglase titled Eight Bagatelles (1982), the composer uses nine different symbols to differentiate the pedalling requirements found throughout the composition. As this score is presently in a handwritten form the composer can devise a pedalling notation to suit the effects he wishes to create.

Ex. 8 from Eight Bagatelles by John Polglase (1982).
Unpublished.
Non-traditional figurations.

Observed in the repertoire are occasionally small sections of unusual figurations used which are unexplained and therefore ambiguous. One example is in the twelve-note pattern in *ppp* (1979) by Barry Conyngham.

The interpretation requires the pianist to play the note twelve times increasing and then decreasing in both speed and dynamics until firstly, the duration of four seconds and in the second and third example, the duration of five seconds is reached. Brenton Broadstock (1984) uses a similar speed fluctuation notation in the second and fourth movements of *Aureole 4*. 

Ex. 9 from *ppp* by Barry Conyngham. 
This sign basically indicates the composer's control over a passage that could be played with some rubato. This method of notating an accelerando has become quite common in contemporary works.

Notational shorthand.

The Australian Piano Miniature series, firstly published by Red House Editions (Editor - Ross Hazeldine) in three volumes each consisting of fourteen compositions, represents the work of forty-two composers. The requirement placed on the composers was to submit a composition which could be published on one page. Time limit or stylistic features were not specified. The result is a collection of some extremely short works and some surprisingly long works by a group of composers who have no particular stylistic connection with each other. There are some examples of extremely clever notation to create, in the space of a page, a comparatively lengthy composition. The shortest work takes twenty-one seconds to perform and the longest, over four minutes.

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23 The series was revised in 1998 and reissued as one volume.
The series is interesting in many ways and examples from the series will be discussed at other points in this dissertation. Some of the pieces are notationally challenging until one deciphers the symbols. One example is a work by Roger Dean written for piano and including spoken text titled ...It Gets Complicated... Within the piece are examples of notes with note heads indicating a crotchet value but which have no stem. The practice of proportionate or "time-space" notation used here receives no explanation from the composer and is particularly confusing as it is interspersed between segments of standard notation. Another example of Dean's work, Three Bagatelles or Right and Left (written for Ian Munro), is written employing proportionate notation throughout, with each 'bar' marked into segments of five seconds. Including no explanation with the score, deters all but the performers familiar with this practice.  

Ex. 11 from ...It Gets Complicated... by Roger Dean.  
Published by Red House Editions, 1992.

25 Time space or proportionate notation is explained more fully in Chapter Three.
The composition entitled Pilots by Joerg Todzy is another example of the use of notational shorthand. It is notated on a mixture of one and two staves and traditional clefs are replaced with a stroke. There is no apparent tempo indication and the score appears to be chiefly cluster chords played in a practically continuous semiquaver movement. This is however merely the visual impression created by the notation as the interpretation required is not to perform the clusters simultaneously. All of the cluster chords are arpeggiated and the effect created is not as the score suggests of cluster chords played harmonically but of notes played melodically extremely quickly, either ascending, descending or a combination of both according to the directions. The following two examples consist of the opening of the work and a realisation of the first bar, illustrating the space it would consume had the
composer written the passage out in full rather than resorting to shorthand. The only presently existing recording is an excellent guide to an interpretation of the work.²⁶

Ex. 13 from Pilots by Joerg Todzy.
Published by Red House Editions, Melbourne, 1992.

Ex. 14 An actual realisation of the first bar of Pilots by Joerg Todzy.

Scores in Fragments.

A score, which is presented in a series of fragments rather than in continuous lines, can be given quite different interpretations. In the Australian Piano Miniature series there are examples of four works employing fragments. Each uses the fragments in slightly different ways; mastering one

example does not imply that one has understood the next. No Consolation by Rainer Linz is one of a series of four Dysrhythmic Etudes. Each of these pieces is based on different well-known piano pieces which are slightly distorted rhythmically so as to be vaguely recognisable as the original work but which need to be treated as new works in themselves. No Consolation was originally the first of the Consolations by Franz Liszt. The score appears as a collection of fragments containing notes with unusually placed stems and flags. One interpretation of the score requires the performer to turn the music upside down and begin the other way around. At the completion of the inverted page the performer must then turn it around again and perform the page the usual way hesitating slightly, as with rubato, at the breaks between the bars. The interpretation is not prescribed by an explanation of the fragments on the page from the composer or editor and this of course allows numerous possibilities. The version which appears on the recording of the entire series, performed by Michael Kieran Harvey, is one such interpretation.27

Another example of the use of disjointed bars, or fragments, is the work *Nonary* composed by Graeme Gerrard. This piece is divided into nine fragments of different lengths and which are numbered 12, 0, 3, 10, 8, 7, 4, 9, 5. The fragments can be played in any order, though the composer suggests a sequence. Rests may be inserted between the fragments and tempi and dynamics are variable. Again the actual performance, with such instructions, can be quite a bit longer than the text suggests.

Ernie Althoff deals chiefly with sound sculpture and several of his scores are notated using graphic notation. His contribution to the *Australian Piano*
Miniature series is a work entitled Speleology. Although constructed in a very similar fashion to Nonary ie. using a series of fragments, the piece contains thirty-five cells which all contain a single sound. The sounds are produced either by playing a chord, with the right or left or both hands, or a single note. Though numbered from one to thirty-five, they are placed in a haphazard fashion across the page. The composer then stipulates in what order these fragments are to be played and the actual 'chance' in the performance results from the time it takes the performer to find the next in the series. "The player’s visual aptitude will determine durations."28 This score is a realisation of a graphic score called Clementine's Father (1991). Obviously, it would be a mistake to 'practise' this piece as by doing so one would destroy the main random element.

Ex. 17 from Speleology by Ernie Althoff. Published by Red House Editions, Melbourne, 1992.

The work by Richard Vella entitled A Piano Reminiscences consists of a series of ten fragments numbered one to ten. The fragments also appear in this order on the page. The composer's intention is for the performer to

"Play until the dotted barline, after which perform the next event immediately or pause (sustain pedal down) for an indefinite period."[29]

These instructions indicate that a much longer piece than suggested can result from the use of longer periods between the fragments. This form of notational shorthand could also be described as an aleatoric style of writing as there is an element of choice in the length of pauses between the fragments.


Aleatoric music and its notation.

Aleatoric music and its practice in performance is, in 1998, not a new concept. However performers, accustomed to much more rigid control over the score from the composer and unused to leaving key factors of performance to chance, can find the expectations placed upon them quite foreign. Generally in music of this nature, the notation could be devised to apply only to a specific score. The pianist may be required to use all parts of the piano, ie. the keyboard, inside on the strings, other wooden parts as well

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as using knuckles, fists, open hands and the more usual method of tone production. These different methods of playing must be notated in each individual case.

**Punk**, written by Theodore Dollarhide (1980), is an example of a graphic score containing a series of musical gestures. As the gestures can be played in any order and in any tempo, as many times as possible and with a pause of unspecified duration between each gesture, the possibilities of recreating even a similar performance on two occasions would be very limited and probably not desirable. The symbols are described accurately by the composer. In the interpretation of the score the performer takes the role of the composer in deciding the progression of the work.

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Ex. 19 from **Punk** by Theodore Dollarhide, 1980.
Unpublished.
The performer chooses the pitch but in some of the chords the composer dictates the number of notes per cluster.

*As You Like It* written by Stephen Leek (1988) in a series of teaching pieces called *Seven Places* is an example of aleatoric music where the performer is given a great deal of freedom over the resulting composition but where the symbols used are based on traditional notation. Leek uses boxes of three notes in the left hand, which must be placed randomly between the notes of the right hand which appear in a fixed sequence. The composer has therefore allowed the pitch to be more determined but the resultant harmony, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and articulation to be left to chance.

Ex. 20 from *As You Like It* by Stephen Leek.
Published by Red House Editions, Melbourne, 1990.

The score for *Raison d'être* by Richard David Hames (1980), for amplified and prepared piano, electronic tape and dancer,\(^{31}\) consists of a series of different size boxes. These constitute a flow chart divided into forty

\(^{31}\) This piece verges on the area of music theatre but is catalogued at the Australian Music Centre as part of their collection of piano music. It is composed using an interesting form of graphic notation.
periods, each of ten seconds duration. There are eight horizontal channels representing eight different sound categories, which are to be determined by the performer. The sound categories should continue for the entire ten second duration and can be repeated to make up to ten seconds or placed in any position toward the end of the ten second period. Since the piano is to be prepared by placing miscellaneous items between the strings and on the felts and since the piano is also amplified, a variety of sounds can be produced. The composer suggests possibilities for the creation of various sounds but does not prescribe these. The work is also for dancer and, even though the resultant creation is in the hands of the performer for the main part, it cannot be left entirely to chance, as a certain amount of coordination must occur between the visual and aural aspects. To perform a piece notated in this way, most pianists trained in the traditional manner must rethink several basic concepts regarding notation, rhythm and preparation for the performance.

Snowflake (1973) by Barry Conyngham was written for the opening of the Sydney Opera house for a performance by Roger Woodward. It is an elaborate looking score consisting of 144 fragments arranged in a "crystalline [snowflake] pattern on each page."32 One player is to have access to four keyboard instruments; a Grand Piano, a Double Manual Harpsichord, an Electric Piano and a Celeste. The performer must also have at his or her disposal a vibraphone stick, soft mallets, hard mallets and a plastic ruler. The keyboard instruments can be exchanged with other instruments or substituted with prepared pianos for the "non-piano instruments." The fragments have been notated with the aid of a computer program. Glancing at the score the performer could be excused for not quite knowing where to begin, as the complexity appears overwhelming. There are four scores rather than one single score, one for each instrument and each consisting of 36 fragments. The performer then decides which fragments to play as all of them are not mandatory, and also in which order. Suddenly with these instructions a glimmer of hope appears and the performer may feel less overwhelmed. Some of the fragments are also called 'jump fragments', which the performer can use to jump from one fragment to another.33 The score which has at first given the impression of extreme complexity now appears to allow the performer the deciding, and accordingly controlling, power. Each performance can be an experiment in creating a different sounding work.

Ex. 22 from the piano score of *Snowflake* by Barry Conyngham. Published by Universal Editions, London, 1973.

Complex Notation.

Chris Dench has been accused of writing scores that are unplayable.\(^{34}\) His piano scores certainly give the impression, at first glance, of extreme complexity. The score however, is not to be taken too literally.\(^{35}\) The

\(^{34}\)Interview with Gunther Schuller regarding the cancellation of a work (symphony 4/propiorecepts) by Chris Dench scheduled for performance by the SSO with Schuller conducting. (*The Australian*, "The Weekend Review." 13-14th May 1995)

\(^{35}\)Chris Dench's reply to the above-mentioned interview, in a letter to the editor of *The Australian*, Sat. 20th May 1995.
composition *Tilt*, written in 1985, is meant to imitate a "Quixotic" pinball player. The work has four different tempi and many different characters changing erratically from one section to another. Although the score looks complex, according to Dench, a certain amount of licence is allowed, not only in its interpretation but also in the very musical factors which one can play in the piece. "I'm trying to use notation in a much more elastic way", he says. "The information I provide the performer is not something that I expect them to slavishly reproduce but a kind of description of a musical object that I would like them to interpret meaningfully". The score, which at first overwhelms because of its complexity, can with this advice from the composer, be seen in a new light.


When is a score not a score? The compositions *Landscape I* (1973) and *Koto Music I and II* (1973/1976) written by Peter Sculthorpe are all for amplified piano and tape. The pianist is required to perform chiefly on the

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37 In a recent interview with Chris Dench (September 1998) he intimated that his works have been more recently notated using simpler techniques.
inside of the piano. However the 'score' in each case, consists only of an instruction page: there is no notation. This allows performers the freedom of choosing elements within certain guidelines specified by the composer.

Despite the fact that some scores appear very complex and others consist only of a single instruction sheet, when the performer is given the controlling power, the approach is the same. One composer may decide to use a very complex compositional method but allows the performer the control over the performance in terms of which fragments to play and in which order, while another composer may employ a simpler form of notation but insist that the performer follow his instructions rigidly. The performer must decide what interpretative licence is allowed.

As the first glance at a score can be the deciding factor in whether or not a performer goes ahead with the learning process, it is obviously very important that the score at least appear encouraging. However as it is possible to see from these few examples as in music of past centuries, the score itself does not always reveal the whole story at a first glance.

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38 The techniques referring to playing inside the piano will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six.
CHAPTER THREE

RHYTHM

The expansion and, in some cases, destruction of tonality throughout the twentieth century occurred simultaneously with many developments to the manner in which rhythmic structure was constructed. An integral aspect of functional harmony is the regular recurrence of strong and weak beats. In his book, Twentieth Century Piano Music, David Burge explains that the music of the nineteenth century may be performed using more rubato than that of the classical and baroque periods. One reason he gives for this practice is the fact that functional harmony became less and less of an issue during the nineteenth century and as a consequence so did the need for strict rhythmical control.39

Schoenberg, whose twelve tone system created an equality for all twelve chromatic pitches, was still aware of the importance of strong and weak beats and even the two note slur, whether or not a resolution was achieved on the second beat. Stravinsky and Bartok however, realised that rhythm and metre had been emancipated from harmonic control and composed using patterns of irregular bar lengths and asymmetric phrases. The barline in many cases lost any previous importance in dividing the music into equal sections and many composers discarded it altogether. Boulez referred to the barline as "a visual aid" which "demarcates a certain number of beats without real participation in the music itself, much as a ruler marks off inches or centimetres without affecting the object being measured."40

Messiaen, one of the most influential composers of this century, employed a principle of added values, derived in part from Indian talas. An excellent example of this principle is in the sixth movement of *Quatuor pour la Fin Du Temps* - *Dans de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes*, where the barline divides the patterns into manageable fragments and aids the rhythmic pulse despite the fact that very few 'bars' are of equal length and no time signature is used. From the following example one can observe the groupings which have an added value meaning that instead of a simple 4/4 bar with a triplet figure (dotted quaver, semiquaver and quaver), the second group of notes has a single added semiquaver.

![Ex. 24 from Messiaen, Quatuor pour la fin du temps](rhythmic pattern at the beginning of the sixth movement)

This movement with its strong rhythmical drive is in unison between the four instruments. The essential rule in learning the work is to give the exact length to the added value and not try to 'fit' the extra notes into a traditional framework. In this movement the semiquaver (being the smallest unit common to all the other values) is the necessary yardstick by which to count when learning the work.
In the Australian compositions examined for this study, rhythm is one of the most interesting aspects. A great deal of the rhythmical structure of the works is, at first glance, complex and quite demanding. Some of this complexity is due to the following devices: cross rhythms and subdivisions in one hand which are independent of subdivisions in the other; compositions without barlines or time signatures and which are seemingly devoid of a pulse and therefore a sense of innate tempo; a constantly changing pulse; and non-symmetrical rhythmic groupings. There are also some instances of very challenging syncopation.

The rhythm of a piece of music can identify that piece as much as its harmonic structure and melodic line. An experiment conducted in an undergraduate theory lecture consisted of using the rhythm of a well-known minuet by Mozart and writing a harmonised non-tonal melody in place of the Mozart melody (keeping the rhythm intact). The result was that the rhythmic pattern was so strong as to immediately render the piece recognisable.41

In the collection of four Dysrhythmic Etudes (1983), Rainer Linz has created a completely new rhythmic structure for well-known piano works while

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41This experiment is conducted frequently in harmony lectures and was also experienced first hand by the author.
retaining the harmonic and melodic structure. For example, the third Dysrhythmic Etude was in its original state the Prelude in C# major from Book I of the Well-Tempered Keyboard by J. S. Bach. Instead of a composition in 3/8 as it appears in the Bach version, Linz has created a composition with frequent changes of metre. Consequently the piece is significantly distorted but still vaguely recognisable due to other inherent features such as melodic line and resulting harmony.

Ex. 26 from Dysrhythmic Etude no. 3 by Rainer Linz.
Unpublished.

In this new version, the work has the added feature of a diverse rhythmic pattern with the gentle harmonic progression designed by Bach taking on a fresh and interesting character.

From the performer's point of view it is also significantly more difficult to perform: where the Bach original has a continuing pulse which does not change and thus need no subdivision, the Linz version has a constantly changing pulse.
Kumari by Ross Edwards (1979, rev. 1980) is a fascinating composition from many aspects and has been examined from various viewpoints in other extant analyses.\(^{42}\) The word "Kumari" is Sanskrit for "pure and untainted by the world"\(^ {43}\) and is an example of Edwards' "sacred" style works.\(^ {44}\) It is in two movements, which are very similar in style, both being in a slow tempo, although the second movement is slightly quicker.

Edwards composed *Kumari* using a series of recurring musical cells. From a performer's point of view the understanding of the cells and the accuracy of reproduction of these cells each time they occur is of utmost importance to the interpretation. The fact that there are no barlines or time signature does not mean that this work is not extremely rhythmical. It is rhythmical in a "timeless" sense, akin to some of the works of Messiaen. The cells, although they recur frequently, do not always occur in the same order and the rhythmic patterns are asymmetric.

Perhaps the most difficult element in performing this work is realising these assymetrical rhythms correctly. Without barlines or time signature each duration must be respected in its own right and in its relationship to the surrounding values. The shortest duration is a triplet semiquaver and the longest is a dotted breve: the relationship between these two note values should be correct.\(^ {45}\)

The performer needs therefore to find a value, or values, which can be used to retain a sense of pulse throughout the various durations. If one counts in quavers, which can be subdivided into semiquavers, one can


\(^{44}\)The title "sacred" for the works by Ross Edwards which are reflective was coined by Corinne d'Aston and has now become universally employed.

\(^{45}\)In an interview with the composer held on March 12th, 1998, Edwards intimated that too rigid an interpretation of this piece was not realising his main intention.
achieve a very accurate rhythmic pulse in the first movement. This can later be expanded into crotchets when the durations are several crotchets or even minimis in length. The 'cells' which use groups of triplet semiquavers seem to suggest that the quaver is the best pulse to maintain.

Ex. 27 from the first section of Kumari by Ross Edwards.
Published by Faber Music Ltd., London, 1982.

In the second movement, with its faster tempo, it seems clear that the crotchet beat is the best unit to utilise.
This form of subdivision is necessary to realise the values as accurately as possible and to maintain the flow of the piece.

Twilight Rain, written by Graeme Koehne in 1979 while he was still a student in Adelaide under the supervision of Richard Meale, presents a different kind of rhythmical problem. The piece is imitative of the 'impressionistic' style cultivated by Debussy and like Kumari contains no barlines or time signature. Whereas Kumari requires a definite pulse to be maintained throughout the various different durations, the problem in Twilight
Rain lies in the absence of a regular pulse, while still realising relationships between the various note values. Twilight Rain is a fairly short work, taking approximately five minutes to perform. It could be described as ‘through composed’ while although there are no recurring sections, several motives appear a number of times and create a sense of continuity. Structurally it consists of several main ideas, written in bold script and several series of grace notes written in a light script. Presumably the notes written in the bold script should adhere to some sort of pulse as they are rhythmically notated. The difficulty is to maintain a constant tempo while fitting in the ‘grace’ notes and at the same time creating a sense of freedom and rubato as an integral part of the interpretation. Take for example this section from the second page:

Ex. 29 from Twilight Rain by Graeme Koehne. Published by Boosey and Hawkes, Sydney, 1979.
The following example from page four of the score illustrates the use of grace notes written in a light script incorporated into the main line, written in bold script.

Ex. 30 from *Twilight Rain* by Graeme Koehne.

The interpretation of the work relies heavily on the imagination of the performer to maintain a sense of rhythmic flexibility and movement while realising at the same time the composer's intentions. Although little has been left to chance in the notation used, two interpretations would yield very different results, depending on the amount of interpretative liberty taken by the performer.

*Agite III* written by Brendan Colbert in 1993 (revised 1995) is one of a series of works which all use the title "Agite". The other works are written for
various other solo instruments. As the title suggests the character of the work is one of agitation. The composer includes the following instruction with the score: "Tempo indication for orientation only; it is more important to convey an 'uneasy and disturbed feeling' than to strictly adhere to the tempo, although it is likewise important that the music is not allowed to drag its feet." Akin to Twilight Rain, the score has no barlines or time signature. The visual effect of the score is definitely one of agitation, created probably by the implication that there are few 'downbeats' and that each group of notes begins after a rest on the main part of the beat. The movement is fragmented and the chief musical element is rhythm accentuated with dynamic effects, devoid of any melodic line. This example from page four of the score illustrates the fragmented nature of the work.

Ex. 31 from Agite III by Brendan Colbert, 1989, unpublished.

The tempo marked is crotchet equals 72-84. The performer must constantly subdivide the crotchet pulse and it would be obviously advisable to work firstly with a metronome to assure accuracy. Also a certain amount of preliminary work is necessary to determine a resultant rhythm between the hands. Such exercise is often necessary with many contemporary works to make a complex score more readable, particularly where the rhythm is

46From the score of Agite III by Brendan Colbert, unpublished.
spread between two hands and where, for many cases, each hand has an
independent rhythmic structure. When referring to a work by Stockhausen in
his book on twentieth century piano music, David Burge advises writing out a
resultant rhythm when a particularly contrapuntal section appears to be
unreadable. In his handbook for conductors and performers, Arthur
Weisberg gives a method for writing out a resultant rhythm for every example
of cross rhythms, necessary, he believes, to create a totally accurate
reading of the score.

In Stephen Benfall's Hammers the pianist is confronted with yet another
form of rhythmical complexity. Hammers was written in 1990 and is dedicated
to Roger Smalley. The work takes approximately twenty minutes to perform.
It gives the impression of a composed improvisation: there are no barlines or
time signatures and the visual impression of the score is that there are no
divisions into segments. The pulse given at the beginning of the work is a
crotchet equals 54. Into this pulse the pianist is to divide sometimes very
complex rhythmic groups. (see example). The tempo changes many times
throughout the score, firstly creating an overall accelerando and then
decelerating to the original pulse again, before increasing once more in
speed to finish. The difficulty is to maintain the pulse against subdivisions,
which are quite foreign to each other, and to merge from one "pulse centre"
to another with ease. Obviously the use of a metronome would, in this
instance, be of utmost importance in holding the pulse accurately. Each
constellation of notes must be learnt arbitrarily and then joined to the previous
constellation in the same pulse, if the realisation is to reach some sort of
fidelity to the score.

48Arthur Weisberg. Performing Twentieth Century Music. A Handbook for Conductors and
Ex. 32 from Hammers by Stephen Benfall, 1990.
Unpublished.
Cross Rhythms

Cross rhythms or the subdivision of the beat into different values played simultaneously are one of the difficulties piano students must conquer when performing a great deal of repertoire. There are countless examples of two notes played against three in classical and romantic repertoire. When they encounter these patterns for the first time many students have to develop phrases to help them play each value independently of the other. It is a difficulty not unique to keyboard instruments, but one which other instruments encounter mainly when playing in an ensemble. Only those instruments capable of playing two or more lines independently of each other can also be capable of performing 'cross rhythms'.

In his composition ... back to the centre (1996) Bruce Crossman employs many examples of cross rhythms to create a feeling of rubato "similar to that which you would use in performing a work by Chopin". The rhythms are not particularly complex, being a mixture of four against three and two against three. The problem is however exacerbated by the range of keyboard used and the tempo of the section to be played.

49 Keyboardists and percussionists would frequently be required to perform works incorporating cross rhythms. Strings players for example would generally only have the opportunity in an ensemble situation. One exception to this rule is in the second movement of the violin concerto by Sibelius. The violinist is required to execute a 'cross rhythm' of two notes against three.
50 Interview with Bruce Crossman 18th March 1998.
Moderately Slow

The creation of a resultant rhythm would help the performance as does memorising the position of the notes. Concentrating on both the leaps required and the rhythmic structure is the major difficulty involved.

Time Space Notation.

Adam Yee's composition Lot (1994 rev. 1995) is notated using time space. According to the Fink and Ricci dictionary, time space or 'a time field' is: "A rhythmic pattern or subdivision of a rhythmic pattern which is difficult to perform because of its complexity and lack of immediate relation to the overriding metric structure."\(^{51}\) The work is short with a duration of 2'33" and is concerned with the biblical character, Lot. As can be seen from the example from pages two and three of the score (which are representative of the whole work) the rhythmic structure is extremely complex.

Page two consists of one bar in 6/4, the tempo indication given in crotchets (ie. crotchet =40.) Page three consists solely of two bars. Apart from the rhythm, which in itself is complex enough in these three bars there are many added instructions. The first bar (on page two) is a 6/4 bar and, allowing for a certain amount of rubato in the interpretation of the left hand notes against the right hand notes, is relatively easy to realise. The first bar of page three is also in 6/4, the second is in 5/4. The instructions for both bars are different from hand to hand. The right hand part of bar two has the instruction that seven notes are to be performed in the time of six. The left-hand part has the instruction that six notes are to be played in the time of five despite the fact that it appears to still be a bar of 6/4. In the following 5/4 bar the instruction for the left hand is the same ie. 6:5 and the right hand figuration is broken up into groups which are either three notes in the time of a minim or five notes in the time of a crotchet. Understanding the notation and meaning of the symbols is one problem the pianist must face, but having deciphered these, performing the work with some form of accuracy is yet
another. Presumably a certain amount of rubato is required in the realisation of the score due to the fact that the human brain is incapable of determining such divisions accurately, despite the slow tempo.

Written in a similar sort of 'time space' are many of the works of Chris Dench. Dench attempts to free music from what he calls "the oppressive yoke of pulse." In his piece Tilt, Dench divides the music not only into bars preceded by a time signature but defines the number of events in each time frame. For example in the first line of the piece, three bars with the time signature of 9/8, the right hand is to play thirteen events in the space of twelve and the left hand eleven events in the space of nine quavers.

Ex. 35 from Tilt by Chris Dench.

With regard to the realisation of this and other similar passages, Dench explains: "This means that when I write something like 17 in the time of 12, I'm not actually telling them I want a literal 17 in the time of 12 but that's how many events there are within that grid that they have to perform.... I don't intend it to be taken absolutely deadpan literally. If I wanted that, I'd use a computer." Because of the rhythmic training experienced by most classical pianists this 'freedom' allowed in the realisation of such a score could at first be confused with an incorrect or sloppy interpretation.

In the realisation of the rhythmic structure of many contemporary works one must approach the score almost independently of other works, as individual problems and their treatments are often unique to a certain piece. It is sometimes necessary to discard previously learnt tenets of playing. Performers who are used to taking the score literally and attempting to recreate the composer's instructions exactly must adjust to situations where the composer has written with extreme complexity and has not really intended the performer to take these instructions literally. As in all music, obviously some knowledge of the composer's overall intention and compositional traits would aid the interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

HARMONIC LANGUAGE

For the last three hundred years western music has been characterised by the development of a musical language which has come to be termed "functional tonality". Despite the fact that this language formed the basis of the compositional structure in all western countries, composers still managed to develop an idiosyncratic treatment of the language. It is possible therefore, with a little experience, to identify works by different composers due to the method that individuals have for treating the same language in a unique way. For example Dvorák has a very distinctive method of scoring a chord quite differently from that of his contemporary, Brahms, although the basic tonal system used is identical. Within the history of tonal music this is not an isolated phenomenon and many more examples of a personal tonal handwriting could be given.

Since diatonic tonality is embedded in the literature of the piano from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, due in part to the coinciding of the invention of the piano with the development of diatonicism, it is possible for a performer to readily learn new works by different composers and relate instantly to their harmonic language. However with the advent of newly devised systems of tonal language in the twentieth century the performer is, in many cases, confronted with the unfamiliarity of the aural expectations of a score. This can make learning a score by an unknown composer a challenge until the language is absorbed. Even understanding a new system and being able to analyse the system does not compensate for the fact that the aural aspect is made more difficult.
Early Twentieth Century Emancipation of Tonality

The abandonment of functional harmony after 1900 gave rise to experiments with tonality and musical expression which then exerted a widespread influence over the music of the entire twentieth century. One decisive influence is the musical language developed by Debussy. Although Debussy was trained in the Classical European tradition, his innovations were based in part on the inflection of the French language and poetry and on the fluid and nonsymmetrical organisation of French meter.54 Debussy replaced functional harmony with a tonal ambiguity, often setting it by contrast against clear cadential statements. His use of the whole tone scale and pentatonic scales also became characteristic and were used in conjunction with complex melodic and harmonic structures.55

The development of the twelve-tone system by Arnold Schoenberg in the early 1920s is one of the major developments in tonality of the twentieth century. According to Leonard Stein it:

"exerted a profound and widespread influence on many subsequent phases of modern composition particularly on the practices of serial music which followed the Second World War."56

Since a great deal of serial music was written for the piano it became necessary for pianists to develop different mental approaches to realise a basic interpretation of these works taking into consideration the serialising of other musical concepts such as dynamics, articulation and rhythmic patterns. As the harmony in a serial work is often constructed of a series of layers of different versions of a tone row it is necessary to distinguish these layers in a

similar fashion to polyphonic music. The pianist had to be concerned with emphasising the main voice (Hauptstimme) as a separate entity from the secondary voice (Nebenstimme) while still creating a sense of unity for the work. A pianist performing a serial work would most likely find an analysis of benefit. Understanding the row and relating it to the intervals used would give the performer a basis from which to begin. Identifying similar material within the same work, i.e. discovering formal concepts and sections which may recur, would also aid in the learning of the work.

Serialism was subsequently applied not only to pitches, but also to all dimensions of musical language including durations, dynamics and articulations. Messiaen was one of the first composers to serialise rhythms to any great extent. He asserted rigid rhythmic control over his material i.e. the augmentation and diminution by one half, one third, one fourth and so on. Although his tonality was more modal than dodecaphonic he did serialise other musical components such as pitches, durations, dynamics and articulations in some works. The harmonic language of Messiaen, based on a tonality which he developed using modes of limited transposition, is readily perceived and thus easily identifiable with a little experience of his work. The particular kinds of chords that Messiaen creates and frequently uses in the two large works, *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* (1944) and *Catalogue d'oiseaux* (1958) are always identifiable as chords of his devising. These two works could be termed tonal based on the principal that they relate to clearly defined tonality.

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Cluster Chords

Regarding the invention of the cluster chord, David Cope in his book New Directions in Music writes:

"One of the most profound aesthetic technicalities of the musical world is that fine differentiation between sound and noise (noise being generally a derogatory term applied to sounds incapable of making music). One of the prime movers in fracturing this elitist concept is the cluster chord or what has become known as the sound-mass."58

The cluster chord on the piano has been attributed to Henry Cowell who in the early part of the century incorporated such chords into works for piano.59 For the performer, cluster chords fall into two categories: Those that are notated as blocks of sound by means of one of the accepted forms of notation and encompass a whole area of the keyboard designated by the composer; and those that are notated exactly note by note by the composer but which achieve aurally a similar effect to the first.

Those that fall into the second category are sometimes notated in this fashion for the very good reason that composers have a particular tonal property that they wish emphasised and which must be played exactly as written. For example in Coalesce (1992) written by Bruce Cale there are several sections which include 'cluster' chords which appear to be of no fixed tonality and which are to be played quite quickly. The composer specifies that these chords must be played exactly as written: "Every vertical cluster in Coalesce has a tonic even in very conflicting harmonic instances. Each vertical is to be played with accurate conviction."60 The performer must ensure that the chords are played precisely so that the idiosyncrasies of each individual chord are audible.

59 See also chapter six where a more detailed explanation for this attribution is cited.
60 From the score, Coalesce by Bruce Cale. Unpublished, 1992.
For the performer the graphically notated solution is eminently easier to realise. When a cluster chord of no particular tonality is written out note by note it is more time consuming for the performer to learn, despite the sometimes very little audible difference between the two solutions.\(^6\)

The following example by Warren Burt is an example of the exact method of notating a series of cluster chords. Taken from War is a Dumb Idea, which is the first of the set of pieces entitled Six Political Piano Miniatures (1990 -1992), it is possible to observe the cluster chords, which could have been written, probably with the same result, in graphic notation. In the form they appear in this excerpt it appears necessary to decipher each chord structure. From the instruction on the score, the general nature of the work and some knowledge of the composer’s style it can be supposed that the composer doesn’t intend a very serious interpretation of the chords and that as long as the general vicinity of the keyboard is correct, one could almost play any clusters.\(^6\)

The fact that the chords are notated so exactly could serve to confuse the performer to the composer’s actual intent.

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\(^6\) This is a personal preference of the author.
\(^6\) This assumption has been determined after listening to a recording of the work performed by Michael Harvey (RED 9401)
An example of a similar effect using graphic notation is the following excerpt from *Punk* by Theodore Dollarhide.  

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57 For a more detailed explanation of the notation used in *Punk*, please see chapter two.
The harmonic language of selected Australian composers.

In the Australian works examined there are many examples of original uses of tonality and the development of a harmonic language using non-tonal elements. An example of a composer who works within a diatonic framework is Brisbane-born Colin Spiers who has written many major works for piano including five sonatas. Spiers describes his musical language as inherently tonal and exhibiting late romantic, harmonic and formal tendencies. The *Elegy and Toccata*, composed in 1980, is a large-scale work in two sections. The basic language used in both sections is tonal, with Eb as the tonal centre. However there are many examples of deviation from the tonal structure. In the elegy there is a section of triadic chords played over a sustained series of chords composed of fourths.

Ex. 39 from *Elegy and Toccata* by Colin Spiers, 1980.
Unpublished.
In the **Toccata** there is an extensive canonic section based on a motive of six notes. The resulting harmony created by the overlapping of several layers of this motive is not tonal.

Ex. 40 from the middle section of **Elegy and Toccata** by Colin Spiers.

Due to the tonal basis to the language developed by Spiers the work can become familiar very quickly.

The modified tonality often found in the writing of, for example, Prokofieff and Stravinsky, referred to by Lindy Steel in her thesis as the
"wrong note" method is an obvious influence in the output of some Australian composers as are the respective harmonic approaches of Hindemith and Bartók. Other composers have used non-tonal elements, the derivation of which is not always obvious. Cope argues that atonality, literally meaning away from tonality or having no tonality, is impossible to obtain because the group of notes due to acoustical principles will have one or more stronger tones (tone centre = tonality).

Compositions where the composer has used diatonic tonality but constantly alters notes within a given frame can be very difficult to learn initially. Such an example is the last movement of The Piper at the Gate of Dawn (1995) by Wendy Hiscocks. This particular work is a suite in four movements and is basically tonal throughout. The last movement is centred upon the tonality of D major but there are sections which contain so many false relations that the tonal centre is not always discernible.

The passage must be learned visually as the performer can not rely on the notes 'sounding' correct until the passage is truly absorbed.

In the following examples of works by Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards it is evident that, although the works of both composers do not conform to preconceived ideas of diatonic tonality the structures of their personal musical languages is not far removed from diatonicism and therefore creates a sense of familiarity for the performer.

Peter Sculthorpe, who has become probably the most often performed of all Australian composers, has developed a musical language which he relates to the influence of the Australian environment. Jonathan Mills writes of Sculthorpe’s music:

Sculthorpe’s most impressive achievement is the creation of an idiom, unmistakably his own, defined in the context of Australia, by a clearly articulated aesthetic. In the absence of a musical tradition in Australia which is easily accessible to Europeans, Sculthorpe’s attempts to evolve a personal style begin with the Australian landscape.

In creating this idiom, Sculthorpe uses several devices repeatedly. Among these are: a fixed tonal centre over a long period of time which engenders a slow rate of harmonic change or a rather static harmonic centre; small intervals of a minor and major second and minor thirds; recurring rhythmic patterns which are usually short; and the lack of a development of material in the classic sense of the term. These features which recur in

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66Jonathan Mills. “Landscapes: the music of Peter Sculthorpe.” Cover of the compact disc titled Landscapes. Musica Viva, MBS 16 CD.
many of his works are responsible for creating a familiar-sounding musical language. This is evident in these passages from two of his piano works. The first example is from the opening bars of Mountains, written in 1980. The intervals, although they are spaced over an octave, are basically all within the interval of an augmented fourth. There is a constant recurring rhythmic pattern over three bars and the harmony is static.

![Ex. 42 from Mountains by Peter Sculthorpe. Published by Faber Music Ltd., London, 1982.](image)

The second example is from the opening section of Diilile. The melody used to open this piece is one of which Sculthorpe is particularly fond. He also used this melody in the string work Port Essington (1977) and Kakadu (1988). The piano version of the melody (Diilile) was completed in 1989. The piece is basically a series of variations on the opening melody joined with a short interlude, which appears between each new entry of the variation of the melody. This excerpt illustrates the opening melody, the first interlude and the first variation on the melody. Again it is possible to note the recurring rhythmic pattern and the small intervallic range.
Ross Edwards is another composer who has been influenced by his natural environment and has developed a musical language which is easily identifiable. Jonathan Mills writes about the music of Edwards:

In the 1970s, Ross Edwards perfected a musical language unmistakably his own, whose crystalline starkness powerfully evokes the essential sound and feel of Australia's eastern seaboard. Edwards claims to have achieved this by distilling characteristic sound events from the natural environment and using them as compositional material.68

Generally Edwards' compositions fall into categories of works written in a similar style at approximately the same time. For example in the period from and including the late seventies until the early nineties the compositions can be classed as either belonging to his 'sacred' or "maninya" style. Works in the sacred series include *Kumari* (1980) and *Etymalong* (1984) and the character of such works is austere, calm and hermetic. The works are slow moving and meditative in quality. Works which include Three Children's Pieces (1988) and Three Little Pieces for the Right Hand Alone (pub. by Allans in Piano Music for One Hand, ed. Shirley Harris) fall into the second category of "maninya" pieces. The characteristics of this series include liveliness of tempo, repetitive dance-like rhythms and a static harmonic basis.

The composition method and language used within these two series are very similar in many works. This is evident in comparing the writing of *Kumari* and *The Tower of Remoteness* (1978) for clarinet and piano. Both fall into the 'sacred' series and are both composed using cells which metamorphose and develop during the composition.

![Ex. 44 from the opening of Tower of Remoteness by Ross Edwards. Published by Faber Music Ltd. London, 1978.](image)

69 For an explanation of the 'sacred' style please refer to chapter three. The term "maninya" style is coined by Edwards and relates to the title of the first piece written in that series, Maninya I (1981) for voice and cello, in which randomly chosen phonetic units are grouped together to form rhythmic cells.

Ex. 45 from *Kumari* by Ross Edwards, 1980.

The 'maninya' style pieces are very similar to each other in the sort of language used and the method of composition. Compare the first section from both *Three Little Pieces for Right Hand Alone* and *Maninya I* for voice and cello. Edwards says that the evolution of the 'maninya' style was probably influenced by a "sub-conscious absorption of a variety of non-western musics".\(^{71}\) \(^{72}\) Evident in both these works is the emphasis on the rhythmic element and a similar lively tempo reminiscent of non-western dance music.

\(^{72}\)The *Five Little Piano Pieces*(1977) use pentatonic tonality and dance rhythms and is an example of the absorption of non-western music.
The point stressed here is that since both Sculthorpe and Edwards have developed an idiosyncratic language that is used fairly consistently throughout their works, their language becomes as familiar as if it were strictly tonal. In both styles there is a strong sense of tonal centring even though the compositions are not diatonically constructed.

Clearly performers must discover new methods of relating to unfamiliar harmonic language. This can occur through a process of analysis or through a study of the composer's personal language and idiom in his other works. In this way the performer may be able to absorb the musical language of the composer in whatever form it may take and communicate this language to the audience.
CHAPTER FIVE

TECHNICAL DEMANDS

The revolutionary compositional techniques of the twentieth century have introduced a variety of different challenges for the performer. These challenges are not only limited to those relating to technique (referring here to agility, strength and control) but also to a variety of skills involved in playing the repertoire.

Most performers spend a great deal of their time working on aspects of their playing with special attention paid to developing a strong and reliable technical basis. The practice of scales, exercises and etudes prepares most diligent pianists for almost any technical challenge that can be devised. The repertoire of the nineteenth century by such composers as Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt and Brahms, for example, explored a virtuosity that can scarcely be exceeded. Scales and arpeggios are not only important as exercises to develop strength and agility but form the basis of the musical language inherent in the standard instrumental repertoire. Music written in the eighteenth and nineteenth century frequently employs patterns which are derived from, and thus practiced, as scales and arpeggios.73 However, many compositions written by contemporary composers pose technical problems which are not related to pure virtuosity and which require the development of different skills. The learning of patterns, which do not fall into the practised diatonic scale structure, can require unusual fingering and will be more

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73 The fact that the harmonic progressions used in an eighteenth or nineteenth century work are predictable can also aid the learning process.
difficult to conquer than patterns which do conform to this structure. These works may need the devising of other exercises to build fluidity within the new patterns. Whole tone scales or scales of unusual formations may need to be practised as may assymetrical arpeggios or progressions of atonal chords rather than triadic progressions.

Pedalling requirements are often more complicated and more exactly notated in twentieth century music, including much of the contemporary Australian music examined. Very detailed and frequently changing articulation requirements and dynamic specifications can also be more demanding than the requirements placed on the performer of eighteenth and nineteenth century repertoire where in many cases a great deal of intuition, based on previous experience of similar repertoire, enables the performer to conceive certain aspects of the interpretation. Kurt Stone observes that:

"Some of today's music is constructed in such a way that the slightest modification of any of its measurable elements is likely to distort the inner logic of the entire work. In such music, only rigid sign realisation is admissible; this music does not permit 'interpretation'. At the same time, however, music of this nature is generally so complex that truly accurate sign realisation is rarely if ever achieved in performance."\(^74\)

While basically applying to notational problems, this statement highlights one performance aspect for those performers who are used to more traditional repertoire. There is sometimes a reluctance to tackle a modern score which requires such a literal reading and allows little flexibility for performers to add, not only their own interpretation, but some of their own personality.\(^75\)

\(^74\)Kurt Stone. "Problems and Methods of Notation". Perspectives of New Music (Spring 1963) p. 31.

\(^75\) In chapter three a discussion of Chris Dench's philosophy on the role of the score and the subsequent performance contradicts this statement by Kurt Stone regarding the inflexibility of the interpretation. In individual examples this statement by Kurt Stone - as for example in the case of Dench - would not apply.
Selected examples of works which involve technical challenges.

Aureole 4, composed by Brenton Broadstock is a work which demands a high level of technical accomplishment. It is not as 'virtuosic' as many works composed in the nineteenth century, but is made quite difficult by the unusual figurations used in the quicker passages. The rhythm used in the opening of the first movement in the left hand figuration is exactly the same as the rhythm that the right hand is to play in the famous Etude op.10 no.5 of Chopin. This is perhaps a rather distant analogy to make, as the two figures, except for the rhythmic pattern, are not in any way similar. However as the rhythm is quite distinctive one can make a comparison. The Chopin etude is based on a major triad patterns and is, despite the brisk tempo, easy to fit under the hand. The etude is also, because of the triadic nature of the patterns used, based on frequently- practised figurations. Aureole 4, on the other hand, consists of an unusual, non-recurring finger pattern and is not only more difficult to play but more difficult to comprehend.

Ex. 48 from the opening of Etude op. 10, no. 5 by Frederic Chopin. Published by G. Henle Verlag, 1975. Munich.
The first Sonata for piano by Carl Vine written in 1988 is a two-movement work. It was written for Michael Kieran Harvey who, apart from being a pianist of great virtuosic skill, is a dedicated exponent of contemporary piano literature for whom many works have been written. The Sonata has several sections within these two movements which include many tempo variations. The faster sections give the aural impression of being extremely virtuosic and difficult. In fact the faster sections are not the most difficult aspect of the piece. These sections are written in very learnable recurring patterns and, once learned, are easily transferred to later passages where the writing is similar.

76 A second sonata for piano has recently been composed by Carl Vine but was not available for perusal at the time of completion of this dissertation.
The speed required of these sections is extreme here and the difficulty relates to the tempo rather than the patterns involved. However it is those passages which are written using cross rhythms and which are to be played in a relatively slow tempo that provide the greater challenge in learning the sonata. Similarly the sections, which require an audible counter melody above an underlying, busy figuration could cause more concern for the player than the sections which are based on finger agility.
Ex. 51 from Sonata no. 1 by Carl Vine.
This excerpt illustrates one of the sections which involve complex 'cross rhythms'.
Ex. 52 from *Sonata no. 1* by Carl Vine.

This excerpt illustrates a section where a countermelody is to be sustained over a busy figuration.

One of the more technically demanding pieces discovered in the available Australian repertoire is *Stroke*, written in 1988 by Michael Smetanin. Composed specifically for the virtuosic talents of Lisa Moore who commissioned the work, *Stroke* is a test of many different kinds of technical problems. It requires significant strength to perform as there are many sections which are to be played extremely loudly. It also requires great agility for the many long stretches of brilliant, virtuosic writing. These sections are not in recurring patterns but are generally spread between both hands and are therefore not as formidable as they appear aurally. The composer describes the piece as "a blockbuster which requires steel fingers as well as velvet ones." The form is kaleidoscopic and the character of the work is violent, aggressive and dynamic.\(^77\) Apart from these considerable difficulties, one of the more exacting features of the work is the realisation of the very sudden dynamic changes. The following example shows the diversity in dynamic level required in a very short space of time.

Unpublished.
Giving an accurate performance of the many dynamic requirements expected in a short space of time is a problem which is not limited to the above mentioned work only. As many serial works include the serialisation of dynamics as well as pitches, durations and articulations, it is common in works which have been constructed serially to have a different dynamic of varying extremes on every note. In the Ross Edwards' work, Kumari the pianist is required to produce the effect of many different layers by placing each layer on a slightly different, but noticeable, dynamic level. This work is not constructed using serial techniques but uses a form of cellular technique, and the dynamics levels relate intimately to the different cells.

Ex. 54 from Kumari by Ross Edwards.

Elena Kats-Chernin is a very competent pianist as well as being one of the foremost composers of the younger generation. She has written many works for piano, all of which are relatively demanding technically and musically. Tast-en, written in 1991, refers to the German word for keys (as in piano keys) and also for touch. Both meanings of the word have relevance to the composition. The work requires a very definite articulation, and must be
played very dryly and clearly. At the speed specified by the composer the work requires a great deal of finger control from the performer to create that dry and clear effect.

Ex. 55 from Tasten by Elena Kats-Chernin. 1991.
Unpublished.

Note also that the dynamic marking specified is extremely soft, "pppp". In the middle of the work there are chords, which must be silently depressed and held by the sostenuto pedal, followed immediately by a chord played with an accent. The co-ordination required between feet and hands at this point will require some consideration.

The AK-47 is the name given to a "Soviet assault rifle much favoured by insurgents and guerillas due to its reliability, availability and general effectiveness"\(^{78}\). It is also the name of a composition for piano solo by Matthew Hindson. It is rare that a piece of music should be compared to an assault rifle and also rare that the performance instructions should be to play the piece "With Terrifyingly Steel-Fingered Ruthlessness"\(^{79}\). The piece is

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\(^{78}\) Score of AK-47 by Matthew Hindson, 1994.
\(^{79}\) Score of AK-47 by Matthew Hindson, 1994
basically minimal in concept with recurring patterns which include clusters. This piece would definitely appeal to those performers who wish to vent their anger at the instrument. The work is very effective but physically demanding and this aspect of physical strength and endurance required is where the main difficulty in performing the work lies. There is also an optional bass drum part, which is to be played with foot pedal. The coordination between the hands and foot pedal could prove an interesting challenge since although the rhythm of the hands is sometimes reflected in the bass drum part, more often the parts are independent from each other.

Pedalling.

The use of the pedals is often a neglected area in the education of many pianists. Students are often left to discover for themselves the effects that can be created by proper use of the damper pedal and the una corda pedal while the sostenuto pedal is rarely, if ever used. This is often because the piano may not possess a sostenuto pedal. Until quite recently composers also did not realise the full potential of the pedal. Its application has often been left to the discretion of the performer and has not even been notated in the score by composers. In particular the sostenuto pedal, exhibited at the Paris exhibition of 1844 by the firm of Boisselot and Sons of Marseilles, has until recently been used very rarely by composers. 80 In the repertoire studied it is incorporated so frequently that a piano not equipped with a third pedal would be inappropriate for much of the repertoire. The sostenuto pedal is most often used with silently depressed cluster chords or single pitches which have to be sustained against other harmonies.

Examples of works which require the use of sostenuto pedal include Kats-Chernin’s *Tasten* where silently depressed chords are sustained with the use of the sostenuto pedal.

Ex. 56 from *Tasten* by Elena Kats-Chernin.

In *A Kumquat for John Keats* (1987) by Andrew Ford, there are several sections which require that the main activity be suspended over chords sustained by the sostenuto pedal. Towards the end of the work, which at that point consists mostly of fragments suggesting the piece is drawing to a close, the left hand is to silently depress an octave “E” (two and three octaves below middle C) and to sustain this interval with the sostenuto pedal until the close of the piece.
The large scale work of 1973 by Larry Sitsky, *Twelve Mystical Preludes*, also incorporates the use of sostenuto pedal into many sections of the work, especially to sustain silently depressed clusters.

One of the more unusual uses of the damper pedal for pianists who have spent most of their practice time trying to coordinate pedal and hand so that there is no blurring of harmonies, is when a composer instructs the pianist to sustain the pedal for the entire work. Josef Hofmann in his book on piano playing instructs the pianist "that the organ which governs the employment of the pedal is - the ear! As the eye guides the fingers when we read music, so must the ear be the guide - and the "sole" guide - of the foot upon the pedal".81 This book, written in 1909 and revised by Hofmann in 1937, is obviously written before such contemporary treatment of the pedal.

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was employed. The instruction to sustain the pedal for the entire work over many harmonic changes does create a dilemma for pianists who have been trained to be guided by the ear in their use of pedal. The natural inclination is to change the pedal at each new harmony. The indication to hold the pedal regardless of harmonic change goes against this learned instinct.82

Examples of works which have this indication include Kumari by Ross Edwards, where the effect obtained is obviously a blurring of some detail but a creation of a dream-like effect. In Purple Prelude by Kats-Chernin the instruction at the beginning of the work is also sempre pedale. A slight modification of this instruction is necessary at some points throughout the work so that some of the harmonies can be cleared in preparation for the next. The depressing of the pedal for most of the work creates a very haunting character and thickens the texture. In the minimalist composition by Stephen Adams titled Obsession II (1985) the pedal is also depressed for the entirety of the work. This has the effect of blurring the line and the progression of the notes. Diiile, by Peter Sculthorpe, is a series of variations on a haunting theme. It also contains the request to depress the pedal for the entirety of the movement until the change of tempo to poco meno mosso is reached.

In the Stuart Greenbaum work, But I Want the Harmonica..., the composer deliberately blurs the change of harmony by sustaining the pedal over harmonic changes. The piece is minimal in style and is centred upon a "D" tonality. Most often the change of pedal occurs once in every bar regardless of the harmonic change. This relieves most of the resonance from the previous harmony and adds a warmer sound to the otherwise sparse texture.

82The Sonata op. 31 no.2, first movement, by Beethoven contains an example of a pedalling indication where the sustaining pedal is to be held throughout several changes of harmony.
In much of the Australian repertoire studied there are many more pedalling indications than there would normally be in a score of, for example, a work of the nineteenth century when mostly the use of the pedal would be left to the discretion of the performer. Where the composer has adamantly insisted on pedalling requirements within a work, one must ask whether the composer has taken into account the possible acoustic of the performing venue and the instrument available for performance. Both considerations are naturally crucial for a performer. It can create a situation where the performer must decide whether to render a performance faithful to all details of the score or allow instinct, based on learned experience to guide the interpretation.
As some contemporary works require techniques which challenge a performer it would be advisable to prepare these difficulties with some sort of preparatory exercises. Very often such exercises can be developed from excerpts of the works themselves. For example, if the problem related to assymetrical patterns played very quickly (as in Smetanin's work, Stroke) these passages could be extracted from the work and made into a technical exercise to be practised out of the context of the piece. Similarly if the problem was repetitive octaves of non-diatonic scalic figures as in Walking on Glass by John Peterson, \(^{83}\) an exercise may need to be developed involving some of the recurring patterns at varying speeds to develop accuracy and stamina for the section. Exercises could also be devised to practice performing the sudden dynamic changes, which occur in many of the works. While the extended techniques in many cases apply only to individual works it is often necessary to devise the preparatory exercises from those works.

To play some works by contemporary composers it is often necessary to possess a solid and brilliant technique, usually attained through the practice of traditional repertoire. However and perhaps more importantly, the performer must also enjoy the challenge of being extended technically, and possess the curiosity to discover new techniques and ways of playing.

\(^{83}\)Walking on Glass is written in five sections. The final section consists almost entirely of double octaves to be played very quickly in a pattern which is not diatonic. The section is difficult because of the accuracy and stamina required.
INNOVATIONS RELATING TO SOUND PRODUCTION FOR THE PIANO

Composers of the twentieth century have found the piano to be a veritable "Pandora's box of unexpected sounds." Together with the exploration and diversification of other musical elements, composers who wrote for the piano explored the possibilities of the instrument especially in connection with sound production.

Some of the experiments with new sounds were created by "(1) the manipulation of the strings by plucking, strumming, and muting, (2) the use of harmonics, (3) the introduction of foreign objects such as glasses of water or metal chains on the strings, (4) the striking of the strings or of metal or wood parts of the frame with hands or mallets. These techniques add a new dimension to the total sonority of the piano." Composers also added the dimension of the spoken voice as an integral part of the composition. Sometimes an electronic medium such as tape was combined with the acoustic medium of the piano, which was, on occasions, also amplified.

In the very early part of the century Maurice Ravel experimented with a simple preparation for the piano part in his orchestral work, L'Enfant et les sortilèges. The pianist is instructed to place paper on the strings inside grand piano. This creates a "buzzing" effect, which is quite different from that sound

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which would normally be expected from a piano. 'Preparation', in the many forms devised by composers, became a very popular method of altering the sound of a piano. John Cage "enjoyed doing things which were not 'supposed' to be done". He wrote many works for the piano, constantly attempting to create different sounds, firstly by muting, placing paper and other objects on the strings and then in 1938 by using various kinds of material inserted between the strings. The first piece of this kind, Bacchanale, was composed in 1938 and performed in 1940. During the period between 1942 and 1951 most of Cage's piano scores were written for a prepared instrument.

As early as 1912, the American composer Henry Cowell began experimenting with the possibilities of different sonorities. The composition The Tides of Manaunaun, written when he was only fifteen and based on an Irish folk tune, uses huge forearm clusters to evoke the impression of tides of water sweeping the earth before creation. While the cluster chord can be attributed chiefly to the inventiveness of Cowell, he can also take a certain amount of credit for investigating the possibilities of manipulating the strings inside the body of the instrument. In his composition Aeolian Harp written in 1923, "one hand silently depresses the chords on the keys while the other sweeps the strings from the lowest to the highest chord tone, depending on the direction of the arrow." These experiments opened the doors for many composers to continue in a similar fashion and to discover more possibilities for themselves.

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Australian composers too have experimented extensively with sound production and various new devices.

**Integrated Pre-recorded Tape.**

In *Koto Music I and II* (1973 and 1976), Peter Sculthorpe instructs the pianist to pluck either with the fingers, plectra or other suitable material the strings of the grand piano. The pieces are performed entirely inside the instrument on the strings of the piano. This effect is to imitate the playing of the *koto*, a Japanese instrument, using the *hirajochi* tuning (E, F, A, B, C). The piano is amplified and accompanied by pre-recorded tape. The taped music which is pre-recorded by the performer to a guideline set by the composer (for both *Koto Music I* and *Koto Music II*), is principally constructed by overlaying layers of ostinati.\(^8\)

In *Landscape I*, written earlier in 1971-72, for amplified piano and pre-recorded tape, the pianist is not only required to pluck the strings, but also to hit the strings with implements including timpani sticks, leather straps, or a wire brush. Again, the tape is pre-recorded by the performer and is integrated into the live improvisation in performance. The nature of the tape is also basically improvised but needs to conform to certain guidelines as set out by the composer.

In the Don Banks composition *Commentary* (1971), which is the only work that Don Banks wrote post-1970 for solo piano, the pianist is required to incorporate a pre-recorded tape into the performance. In this case, however the tape is devised by the composer. It will accordingly be identical for each performance unlike the Sculthorpe examples where the performer has a more creative input into the tape production. The work is in one continuous

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\(^8\)Performance notes taken from the score, by Peter Sculthorpe.
movement with constant interplay between the live and recorded elements. The recorded element also includes voices and electronically produced sounds and is quite humorous. The live component is extremely virtuosic, rhythmically challenging and is composed using serial techniques.

**Integrated Text**

Integrating words to be spoken by the performers into instrumental works is another innovation used by composers of the twentieth century. Many European composers, such as Stockhausen, Penderecki, Ligeti and Hans Werne Henze incorporated the voice both to give dramatic emphasis to text and as an instrument separate from verbal associations into their instrumental works. One example by a European composer is Mantra for two pianists and ring modulator by Karlheinz Stockhausen where the pianists, towards the end of the work, stand up and basically shout at each other from either side of the stage. It is a particularly dramatic effect in an accordingly dramatic work.

Warren Burt, the American born but presently Australian-based composer, wrote his Six Political Piano Miniatures in 1990-92. They are for piano and integrated text, spoken by the pianist. In the third of the set, All Nations-Hallucinations the note patterns played by the pianist follow the exact speech rhythm and voice inflections of the text. In the fourth of the set, Fact, the pianist provides the spoken text with a complex accompaniment. Similarly, the sixth piece of the set, Act up! , consists of a politically inspired (spoken) text accompanied by the piano. These three miniatures from the collection which incorporate spoken text can not in any way be classified as

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"songs" but merely use the voice as another communication medium integrated into the whole sound.

The text used in Roger Dean's contribution to the Australian Piano Miniature Series, ...It Gets Complicated... could be interpreted as almost describing the composition itself in a sort of running commentary. The text, interspersed throughout the composition and spoken in fragments states:

"...sometimes the numbers look good, sometimes you think you understand, optimism? but then it gets complicated, it complicates you."91

The composition begins with a silently depressed chord, which is held for the duration of the piece. The rhythm at the beginning, preceding the introduction of any text, consists of a group of five notes, followed by seven and then nine in the time of eight. The next line, which is prefaced by the words (to be "spoken in a conversational voice"92) "...sometimes the numbers look good" is even more simple - merely two groups of five followed by four long held notes. The next line beginning with the words - "sometimes you think you understand" begins towards the end of the line to become more rhythmically complicated with different patterns in each hand. The next line consists musically of a held chord, depressed silently, whilst strumming on the strings and speaking both fragments - "optimism " and "but then it gets complicated." This appears to be a catalyst for the fury of the last line, which involves very fast notes with sudden dynamic plunges ordered into a complex rhythmic structure. The piece ends quietly with the words -"it complicates you". It is almost as if the purpose of the text was to give the pianist learning the score and perhaps the audience a detailed description of the work as it progresses.

91From the score ...It Gets Complicated... By Roger Dean. Published by Red House Editions, Australian Piano Miniatures Vol. III.
92From the score ...It Gets Complicated... By Roger Dean. Published by Red House Editions, Australian Piano Miniatures Vol. III.
Preparation

Preparation of the piano to create a great number of different effects and sounds can range from something quite simple to a very complex exercise involving all kinds of foreign bodies. It generally requires the use of a grand piano. Placing paper, or some light material on the strings to mute the sound, as in the work mentioned earlier by Ravel, is one simple but effective method of creating a different type of sound from what is usually expected from a piano. In Peter Sculthorpe's *Landscape II*, (1978) for piano quartet, the composer wishes to create the sound of 'blowflies buzzing' in the second movement. This is quite easy to achieve in the string writing but would not be possible in the piano writing without the help of some sort of preparation. By placing sheets of thin paper on the strings in the area which is then to be played on the keyboard, the effect is achieved very successfully and easily.
Also used in the second movement are pieces of rubber placed on the node between the strings to create harmonics similar to those used by string players. The notes are then played on the keyboard.

In Georges Lentz's Caeli enarrant ... V, the pianist must mute the strings in the upper part of the piano with books or other heavy objects towards the end of the work. The work features extended periods of silence where the only sound is the remaining resonance of the previously played notes. At the beginning of the work the notes which are actually played appear at rare intervals. The composer has a particular interest in astronomy and the work is trying to create the effect of the vastness of space. Clusters of sound falling against a backdrop of silence and resonance illustrate the effect of the light of the stars in a black night. The work is centred tonally on the pitch "D" and the "D" next to middle C is tuned at quarter tone intervals (ie. the three strings connected to that pitch are tuned each a quarter tone higher than each other). This gives that particular tone a twanging effect, particularly as, to create the effect of utmost resonance for as long as possible, it is played with extreme force. The rest of the clusters, played melodically and harmonically, are composed serially.
The muting of the upper half of the piano is used to create a particularly muffled sound and a sufficient number of books or similar heavy objects, which cover a certain area of the string bed, are required for this effect. The composer also uses the effect of pressing down the pedal very emphatically while there are still chords sustained on the keyboard. This creates a percussive effect as well as sustaining the sound of the previously played chord. The pedal is notated using its own stave.
Ex. 61 from page 4 of *Caeli enerannt ... V*

*Barcarolle* (1992) by Andrew Schultz is a short work lasting approximately four minutes. The normally calm-invoking rocking motion of the typical barcarolle is, in this example, given a dark character created firstly by the harmonies used and secondly by the insertion of pieces of rubber placed on the node of two strings (low C and G). This preparation produces a gong-like effect which continually interrupts the flow of the music. One could imagine that the uncanny sound is like a death-bell tolling especially as the piece derives from a song cycle drawn from tombstone texts.

Ex. 62 from *Barcarolle* by Andrew Schultz.
Published by Red House Editions, Melbourne, 1992.
The preparation required for *Hammered* (1989) by Stephen Leek is, on the other hand, much more complicated. This piece, written as one of a series of works for a joint project between the composer and the Australian Association of Dance Education can be used for choreographic purposes, or as a piece in its own right. Following are the instructions given by the composer for the preparation.

Ex. 63 from the instruction page of *Hammered* by Stephen Leek, 1989.
Unpublished.

The composer also adds that if the preparation does not fit the available piano, the amount and means of preparation can be altered. In fact one of the main problems with some of the more detailed preparations of the piano is the fact that many pianos depending on size and make differ inside the frame. If the metal frame is different it is often impossible to place the objects where they are required and where they may fit perfectly easily in another instrument.
The entire work is based on fifteen pitches, all of which are prepared. Apart from the preparation, this work is very straightforward rhythmically and technically and easily performed by a student of moderate ability. However the preparation makes this a very interesting sounding work and is in fact very similar to the way prepared piano was used by John Cage. Cage composed many scores for small dance ensembles, having worked as a pianist with dance groups and percussion ensembles. He found a 'prepared' piano offered a particularly suitable sound for the type of choreography used.\textsuperscript{93}

Nigel Butterley's \textit{Letter from Hardy's Bay} requires the preparation of four pitches.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image.png}
\end{figure}

Two bolts are placed on the strings of each of the pitches at positions specified by the composer. The composer takes into consideration the fact that the metal framework may make this difficult if not impossible and provides the option of using other positions if this is the case. These four pitches are most often played throughout the piece simultaneously as a chord, sustained over several bars. The chord is played loudly and pedal is used to sustain the sound. The composer also incorporates blocks of chords (silently depressed clusters of sound) and harmonics, produced by touching the string at a certain point and playing other notes on the keyboard. The actual sound intended is one octave higher than that played. This work, written in 1971 for pianist David Bollard, relates to the inlet in the Brisbane Water, north of Sydney, where the composer frequently spends time writing

music. The chord created by the prepared notes has a gong-like sound, which halts the flow of the music each time it appears. The composer likens this to "an idea which keeps on coming to the surface of one's train of thought, no matter how much one tries to get away from it." As in Barcarolle by Schultz, the sound produced by the prepared notes is integrated into the normal acoustic sounds produced by a piano and creates a startling effect each time it is introduced.

Ex. 64 from *Letter from Hardy's Bay* by Nigel Butterley. Published by J. Albert and Son, Australia, 1972.

In all the above-mentioned examples a grand piano is specified. However, *Inside and Out* by Stephen Holgate (1979) is an example of a work for prepared upright piano. This composition is in two short sections and the various components ie. inside the piano, the keyboard itself, the 'right' pedal and the 'left' pedal are all notated on separate staves. The work also specifies that it is for a "one handed pianist" meaning of course that only one hand is needed for the execution of the work. In the first section the preparation

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94 Score to *Letter from Hardy's Bay* by Nigel Butterley. Program notes provided by the composer.
consists of two matchboxes being placed behind the hammers near the note Eb in the lower treble clef. This is intended to bring the hammers approximately three centimetres forward. The result is a muffled sound created with the aid of the left pedal. In the second section a piece of cork is placed into the vertical strut of the left pedal mechanism. This is also designed to bring the hammers forward when the left pedal is firmly depressed. The strings are also plucked with the fingernail inside the body of the piano. All the preparation can only be carried out if the covers at the front of the piano are removable. Detailed descriptions and illustrations of the method of presentation and explanation of non-traditional notation accompany the score.

Unpublished.
Several of the piano works by Colin Spiers contain instructions for the preparation of the instrument. *The Princess of Mandala* (1981), which is a large scale work taking approximately twenty minutes to perform, uses devices such as plucking the strings, dropping a light chain across the strings, harmonics and percussive effects on the cross beams and soundboard.\(^{95}\) Spiers has also written a series of five sonatas, which are descriptive in character referring to members of the composer's family.\(^ {96}\) In the third sonata, subtitled "Divine Symmetry", the piano is prepared and there is some plucking of the internal strings.\(^ {97}\)

The experimentation with alternative methods of sound production add a whole new dimension to piano writing and to performance. Probably the main problem with scheduling a piece for prepared piano in a concert program is the time it takes to complete the preparation and when, within the time frame of a performance, to actually carry out the preparation. In Nigel Butterley's score of *Letter to Hardy's Bay* the composer makes the very practical suggestion of marking in the positions of the 'bolts' before the concert so that the placement is then a quick affair. In the case of simple preparations such as the placement of paper or books, the preparation can be carried out at the beginning of the performance of the work with only a trial run necessary beforehand. Unfortunately, in the case of the work by Georges Lentz - *Caeli enarrant... V* the tuning of the note 'D' in the manner suggested, necessitates having two pianos on stage if the performer wishes to continue the recital with other works as it is quite time consuming to tune the strings to the necessary pitch. If the tuning is carried out any time during the performance the piano will also require retuning to bring the strings back to their original pitch.


\(^{96}\) The sonatas are all written for and about the characters of various family relatives of the composer.

Incorporating new devices such as those mentioned in this chapter into the repertoire adds many new dimensions for a pianist. Plucking inside a piano requires a technique with which the performer can feel comfortable and must be developed as any new skill. One must also make decisions as to which implements are best used to pluck the strings and which implements make the best or most appropriate sounds. (eg. plectra, fingers, pieces of metal etc.) The performer may need to gather together a collection of such items, including paper of a particular thickness, screws, nuts and bolts. These should be always stored with the pertinent score.

The exploration of different sonorities and the devising of new methods of sound production can add yet another dimension in playing the piano that is fulfilling and exciting. The performer should welcome this challenge and enjoy communicating the innovations to the audience.

98The use of fingers as a plucking implement on the inside of the keyboard is generally frowned upon because of the risk of ruining the strings with the sweat from the fingers.
CONCLUSION

This study of Australian post-1970 solo piano music was originally instigated in an attempt to broaden a personal knowledge of the repertoire. Limiting the study to those works written after 1970 became a necessary decision due to the amount of works written even within that time span. The study was also conducted to investigate reasons for some of the aversion expressed by teachers and professional colleagues toward contemporary music, particularly Australian contemporary music.

From the examination of these works it is possible to draw several conclusions. Some of the works reflect current contemporary tendencies which appear in music composed in other countries within the same era. The compositional techniques used reflect a development of traditional compositional techniques incorporated with original innovations from individual composers. Similarly many of the works are very pianistically written and develop, rather than contradict, previously learned techniques of piano playing.

In examining a selection of works with reference to contemporary innovations it is evident that although there is occasionally unusual treatment of traditional musical elements, there is always a solution to deal with the difficulties encountered. This is often best achieved by incorporating studied practice methods of traditional repertoire and applying these to the contemporary literature. Some composers continue to write works firmly imbued with nineteenth century styles and these works are also best prepared using traditional practice methods.

In Australia there are many pianists who have specialised in performing Australian contemporary music. This means that there are many excellent recordings available of a great deal of the repertoire. Live performances of
contemporary works are a regular occurrence in all universities where a number of composers are either visiting artists or holders of teaching positions. It is therefore possible to experience the repertoire not merely visually from the score but also aurally from recordings and performances.

The teaching repertoire examined shows many examples of a transition between traditional and non-traditional elements and in many cases demonstrates an excellent introduction for students to encounter some of the innovations made to piano writing. Sally Mays' excellent publication, *Australian Piano Music*, includes technical preparatory exercises to accompany all of the repertoire. Mays believes that a great deal of the aversion relating to contemporary music comes from fear of unknown elements and one should be able to overcome this fear by explanation and exploration\(^1\)

There are many advantages available to performers and teachers who choose to play and teach Australian repertoire. One of the main advantages is that the music is almost all readily available at the Australian Music Centre for relatively little cost. The scores which are not available there can generally be obtained from the composers personally through information supplied by the music centre. Another principal advantage is that the composers are very often contactable when a problem with the score may arise and can discuss with the performer problems relating to difficulties with notation and understanding the score. Conversing with the composer could solve many of the problems highlighted in this dissertation. It also creates the situation of a profitable liaison between composer and performer. Indeed, many compositions examined were written as commissions particularly designed for the technical and musical abilities of an individual performer.

\(^1\) Discussed at an interview with Sally Mays, September: 1977.
Although there is still evidence of negative attitudes to contemporary music in general the situation is gradually changing and many more concert patrons encounter and almost expect the introduction of contemporary works integrated into a program of more traditional fare. Many of the contemporary treatments of musical concepts might be more acceptable to audiences and performers if attitudes could be altered. In his article written in 1964 concerning the performance of contemporary music, Charles Wuorinen comments that many of the problems facing the performer with particular regard to rhythm are psychological and can be overcome merely by a different mental approach.99

Based on personal experience, it has been observed that an increasing number of students enjoy performing compositions which contain interesting innovations and discovering new techniques relating to sound production. Teachers who may experience a feeling of trepidation in grasping new concepts could try to communicate with composers to help the investigative process. The practice of performing contemporary compositions could be regarded for some as a challenge but could quickly, with a little enthusiasm for the task, become an interesting and worthwhile experience.


This publication presents a discussion of 900 solo piano works written post-1970 and examined for this study with particular emphasis on aspects relating to performing the repertoire.
APPENDIX II

The following programs constitute the performance presentation for the degree.

PROGRAM I

Ludwig van Beethoven  
Quartet in E flat major for piano, violin, viola and violoncello. Opus.16

Anton Dvorák  
Quartet in E flat major for piano, violin, viola and violoncello. Opus 87

Peter Sculthorpe  
Landscape II (1978)

Johannes Brahms  
Quartet in G minor for piano, violin, viola and violoncello. Opus 25.

Artists:-
Jeanell Carrigan, piano
Goetz Richter, violin
Anne-Louise Comerford, viola
Catherine Hewgill, violoncello.

Performed at the Springwood Civic Centre as one of a series of subscription concerts for Musica Viva, 13th October, 1995
PROGRAMME II

Andrew Schultz  Stick Dance III for violin, B flat clarinet and piano
Ross Edwards    Kumari
Georges Lentz   Caeli enarrant... V for prepared piano
Olivier Messiaen Quatour pour la fin du temps for violin, B flat clarinet, piano and violoncello.

Artists:-
Jeanell Carrigan, piano
Goetz Richter, violin
Francesco Celata, clarinet
Fenella Gill, violoncello.

Performed at the Hope Theatre, University of Wollongong, 28th April 1996
PROGRAMME III

Claude Debussy
- Selections of Preludes from Book II
  - Brouillards
  - La Puerta del vino
  - Canope
  - Bruyères
  - Ondine
  - Général Lavine - eccentric

Olivier Messiaen
- L’Alouette Lulu
- Le Merle bleu
  (from "Catalogue D'Oiseaux")

Serge Prokofieff
- Sonata no.5 in C major

Nigel Sabin
- Another Look at Autumn

John Peterson
- Walking on Glass

Jeanell Carrigan, piano

Performed at the Hope Theatre, University of Wollongong, 23rd February, 1997.
PROGRAM IV

Wendy Hiscocks
Piper at the Gate of Dawn

Barry Conyngham
ppp

Brenton Broadstock
Aureole 4

Bruce Crossman
...back to the centre

Graeme Koehne
Twilight Rain

Elena Kats-Chernin
Purple Prelude

Stuart Greenbaum
But I Want the Harmonica...

Colin Spiers
Elegy and Toccata.

Jeanell Carrigan, piano

Performed at the Hope Theatre, University of Wollongong, 22nd March 1998.

The first three recitals illustrated an integration of Australian contemporary works into programs also containing standard nineteenth and twentieth century repertoire. The final program consisted solely of Australian works. The entire Australian repertoire was chosen to illustrate a diversity of styles and to highlight several different compositional techniques. The works (with the exception of Another look at Autumn by Nigel Sabin) have been discussed in the dissertation with particular reference to performance aspects.
APPENDIX III

Also submitted for examination is a compact disc recording of the following Australian solo piano works. The compact disc was released by the Australian Music Centre in July, 1998, on the VOXAUSTRALIS label (VAST023-2).

Another Look at Autumn (1993)  
The Piper at the Gate of Dawn (1995)  
ppp (1979)  
Aureole 4 (1984)  
Purple Prelude (1996)  
But I Want the Harmonica (1996)  
Elegy and Toccata (1980)  
Nigel Sabin  
Wendy Hiscocks  
Barry Conyngham  
Brenton Broadstock  
Elena Kats-Chernin  
Stuart Greenbaum  
Colin Spiers
(A) BOOKS


(B) DISSERTATIONS


(C) ARTICLES


Black, Robert. "Contemporary Notation and Performance: Three Difficulties."

Perspectives of New Music. Fall/ Winter 1983.

Dench, Chris. "Chris Dench on the Absurdity of the Totalitarian Vernacular"


Mills, Jonathan. "Landscapes: the music of Peter Sculthorpe." Cover of Compact Disc titled Landscapes. Musica Viva MBS 16 CD.


Stone, Kurt. "Problems and Methods of Notation". Perspectives of New Music (Spring 1963): 9-31


(D) SCORES

For a complete list of scores examined for this research please consult Appendix I where the scores are listed alphabetically, by composer, and accompanied by a short description. The following scores are those cited in this paper.


______ War is a Dumb Idea (from Six Political Piano Pieces)


Colbert, Brendan. Agite III. 1989. (Unpublished)


Crossman, Wallace Bruce. ...**back to the centre.** 1997. (Unpublished).


__________ **Three Little pieces for the Right Hand Alone,** Melbourne: Allans


_______ **A Kumquat for John Keats,** 1987. (Unpublished)

Fowler, Jennifer. **Music for Piano- Ascending and Descending.** London:


(Unpublished)

Hindson, Matthew. AK-47. 1994. (Unpublished)


_______ Hammered: for prepared piano. 1989. (Unpublished)

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(E) RECORDINGS

Many recordings aided the process of research and for a complete list of recordings please consult *Australian Post-1970 Solo Piano Works. An Annotated Guide*. The following recordings have been cited in the dissertation.

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